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Sarasvatī
Riverine Goddess of Knowledge

From the Manuscript-carrying *Vīṇā*-player to
the Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma

By
Catherine Ludvik



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On the cover: Fig.8 Sarasvatī sculpture from Uttar Pradesh. Sixth century. Sandstone. Ht. 84.2 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Photograph from The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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For my mother
who is always there for me

CONTENTS

Preface xi
Abbreviations xiii
List of Illustrations xv

Introduction 1

PART ONE
VEDIC SARASVATĪ

Vedic Literature 9

Chapter One Ṛg Veda 11
1. River Goddess 11
2. Water 16
3. Might 22
4. Sacrifice 24
5. Inspired Thought 26
6. From River to Speech 37

Chapter Two Atharva Veda 40
1. Worldly Matters 40
2. Sarasvatī and Speech 42
3. The Three Sarasvatī 43

Chapter Three Yajur Veda 44
1. Sautrāmaṇī Ritual 44
2. Sarasvatī and Speech 52
3. Sarasvatī and the Ewe 53

Chapter Four Brāhmaṇas 57
1. Sarasvatī as Speech 57
2. Prajāpati and His Daughters 60
3. Barter for Soma 72
4. River Sarasvatī 84

Vedic Sarasvatī in Retrospective 87

PART TWO
EPIC AND PURANIC SARASVATĪ

Epic and Puranic Literature 95

Chapter Five Mahābhārata 97
1. Mythology of the River 97
2. Goddess of Knowledge 111
3. Sarasvatī as Daughter, Wife, and Mother 116

Chapter Six Purāṇas 117
1. Brahmā and Sarasvatī 118
2. Names of Sarasvatī 122
3. Worship of Sarasvatī 127
4. Iconography of Sarasvatī 131

Epic and Puranic Sarasvatī in Retrospective 136

PART THREE
BUDDHIST SARASVATĪ

Sarasvatī in Buddhist Sutras 145

Chapter Seven Sutra of Golden Light 146
1. The Sutra 146
2. Preaching of the Sutra in India 150
3. The Sarasvatī Chapter 154
4. Rendering Sarasvatī's Name into Chinese 154

Chapter Eight Great Eloquence Deity 158

Chapter Nine Bath 162
1. Introducing the Bath 162
2. Instructions for the Bath 164
3. Sarasvatī and the Bath 172

Chapter Ten Kauṇḍinya's Praises 183
1. Shorter Praise 184
2. Spell Taught by Sarasvatī 188
3. Longer Praise 190
4. Spell Rite 207
5. *Harivaṃśa* Hymn 209
6. Words of Praise To Be Recited 216

The Sutra's Sarasvatī in Retrospective 219

PART FOUR
IMAGES OF SARAṢVATĪ

Identification of Images and Goddesses 225

Chapter Eleven Early Images of Sarasvatī 226
1. Bhārhut 227
2. Ghaṇṭaśāla 228
3. Gandhāra 230
4. Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā 231
5. Samudragupta and Samācāradeva Coins 235
6. Uttar Pradesh 238
7. Ākoṭā and Vasantgarh 241
8. Mātṛkā Brahmāṇī 246
9. Ellorā Onward 247

Chapter Twelve Images Corresponding to Yijing's Goddess 251
1. Mahiṣāsuramardinī Images 252
2. Eight-Armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī Images 259
3. Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Yijing's Goddess 264

Images in Retrospective 269

Conclusion 271

Appendix A Sarasvatī Chapter of the Sutra of Golden Light 277
Appendix B Herb Lists for the Bath 309
Bibliography 317
Index 339

PREFACE

The goddess of knowledge Sarasvatī, to whom this book is dedicated, has been my steadfast companion for more than a decade, from the writing of my dissertation at the University of Toronto to the completion of the present volume. The goddess's hymns and images have inspired and informed my work, and much preoccupied my mind. As the long winding road to the publication of this monograph draws to an end, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable help and generosity of the numerous individuals and institutions who assisted me in countless ways.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Werner Knobl, Lecturer at Kyoto University, for his exhaustive comments on my studies and translations of Sanskrit sources, most especially Vedic texts. His passion for words, his erudition, and his uncompromisingly high standards have inspired me, while his kindness and tireless patience have nurtured me. For the translation of Chinese sources, my mentor has been the late Professor Antonino Forte of the Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale": I am deeply grateful to him for his innumerable comments, his meticulousness and precision, his great generosity, as well as the enthusiasm he always showed for my work. I am also indebted to Professors David B. Waterhouse, Joseph. T. O'Connell, L. C. D. C. Priestley, John Rosenfield, Hubert Durt, H. W. Bodewitz, and Chen Jinhua for their most helpful suggestions and comments.

Work on my Sarasvatī research project was generously supported by a Connaught Scholarship, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Fellowship, and a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbushō 文部省). I am particularly grateful to Professor Donohashi Akio 百橋明穂 of Kobe University 神戸大学 for sponsoring me for the Monbushō scholarship and for assisting me in various ways over the years. I have also benefited greatly from being a researcher at the Italian School of East Asian Studies (Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale) in Kyoto, where I found a congenial place to work and meet other scholars.

Obtaining photographs and permissions for illustrations has involved the helping hand of numerous individuals. I would especially like to thank Koezuka Takashi 肥塚隆, Professor Emeritus of Osaka

University 大阪大学, for kindly providing so many of his own photographs (figs.1, 3, 15, 17, 19–24). I could not, furthermore, have acquired all the necessary permissions from museums in India and Indonesia without the assistance of Swami Tejomayananda and members of Chinmaya Mission centers in Mumbai (Manisha Khemlani), New Delhi (Col. S. C. Vohra), Kolkata (Sunil Rungta), Vadodara (Brahmacārī Suveda), Hyderabad (R. Krishnamoorthy), and Jakarta (Sacheen Lasmana). I am deeply grateful to them all. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of Jack Howard, Michael Hagino, Ellen Raven, Susan Huntington, Sherry Fowler, and Erika Forte.

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Parts of this book were previously published in the form of articles: in Chapter One, the sections on "Inspired Thought" and "From River to Speech" (pp.26–39) are a slightly modified version of "Sarasvatī-Vāc: The Identification of the River with Speech," which appeared in *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 54:1 (2000), pp.119–30; and my discussion of the "Barter for Soma" myth (pp.72–84) in Chapter Four was published in *Annali dell'Istituto (Universitario) Orientale di Napoli* 58:3–4 (1998), pp.347–58, under the title "The Barter for Soma: Vāc, Women's Love of Music, and Sarasvatī's *Vīṇā*." I would like to thank the respective publishers of these journals for allowing me to include this material in the present volume.

ABBREVIATIONS

Sanskrit Texts

AiB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
AV	*Atharva Veda*
BĀU	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
DM	*Devī Māhātmya*
JB	*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*
KapS	*Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā*
KāṭhS	*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*
KauṣB	*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*
Mbh	*Mahābhārata*
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*
PB	*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (or *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa*)
RV	*Ṛg Veda*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
VāyuP	*Vāyu Purāṇa*
VdP	*Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*

Chinese Buddhist Texts

T.	*Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*

Other

EVP	*Études védiques et pāṇinéennes* (Renou 1955–69)

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The following illustrations can be found at the back of this volume:

Fig. 1 *Vīṇā*-player on a stupa pillar from Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh. Second century B.C.E. Red sandstone. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi 肥塚隆.

Fig. 2 Modern Sarasvatī carved on a defaced second- or third-century C.E. Buddhist image from Ghaṇṭaśāla, Andhra Pradesh. Marble. Śiva temple, Ghaṇṭaśāla. From Rea 1894, pl.XXXI.

Fig. 3 Sarasvatī from Kaṅkālī Tīḷā, Uttar Pradesh. Ca. third century C.E. Red sandstone. Ht. 57 cm. State Museum, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig. 4 Obverse of Samudragupta lyrist type coin showing the king playing the *vīṇā*. R. ca. 350–75. Gold. Diameter 2.20 cm. Thickness 1 mm. Lingen Collection, The Netherlands. Photograph courtesy of Jan Lingen.

Fig. 5 Reverse of Samudragupta lyrist type coin showing Lakṣmī with fillet and horn of plenty. R. ca. 350–75. Gold. Diameter 2.20 cm. Thickness 1 mm. Lingen Collection, The Netherlands. Photograph courtesy of Jan Lingen.

Fig. 6 Obverse of Samācāradeva *rājalīlā* type coin showing the king seated on a couch with a female attendant on each side. R. ca. 550–75. Gold. Diameter 2.03 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.

Fig. 7 Reverse of Samācāradeva *rājalīlā* type coin showing a female figure standing amidst lotuses with a *haṃsa* below. R. ca. 550–75. Gold. Diameter 2.03 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.

Fig.8 Sarasvatī sculpture from Uttar Pradesh. Sixth century. Sandstone. Ht. 84.2 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum purchase with funds provided by "One Great Night in November 2004"; "Polo in India: A Great Tradition," with gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Sesh Bala, Dr. and Mrs. A. P. Raghuthaman, Mr. and Mrs. Ashok Rao; the Friends of Asian Art, with gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Edward R. Allen III, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Daly, Mr. and Mrs. John Goodman, Dr. and Mrs. Ninan Mathew, Drs. Kumara and Usha Peddamatam, Isabel B. and Wallace S. Wilson, and the Caroline Wiess Law Foundation; with additional gifts from Terry Huffington and Ralph Ernest Dittman, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Sullivan, and Mr. and Mrs. Gordon E. Nicklos, by exchange. Photograph from The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Fig.9 Sarasvatī sculpture from Sārnāth, Uttar Pradesh. Sixth century. Reddish Chunar sandstone. Ht. 35.5 cm. Sārnāth Museum of Archaeology. Courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Fig.10 Sarasvatī and two attendants in medallion from Uttar Pradesh. Ca. 600–99. Buff sandstone. 64 x 68 cm. State Museum, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Fig.11 Sarasvatī sculpture from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Ca. seventh century. Beige sandstone. Ht. ca. 12.70 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art.

Fig.12 Sarasvatī from Ākoṭā, Gujarat. Ca. 600–20. Bronze. Ht. 26.67 cm. Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara, Gujarat. Courtesy of the Department of Museums, Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from Shah 1959, pl.18.

Fig.13 Sarasvatī from Ākoṭā, Gujarat. Late seventh century. Bronze. Ht. 31.24 cm. Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara, Gujarat. Courtesy of the Department of Museums, Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from Shah 1959, pl.33.

Fig.14 Brahmāṇī from Koteswar, Banaskantha District, Gujarat. Sixth century. Stone. Ht. 60.96 cm. Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara, Gujarat. Courtesy of the Department of Museums, Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Fig.15 Sarasvatī in the shrine of the river goddesses in the left courtyard of Cave 16 (Kailāsanātha) at Ellorā, Maharashtra. Eighth to ninth century. Stone. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.16 Sarasvatī sculpture from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Tenth century. Stone. Ht. 68.6 cm. © Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum. Photograph from The British Museum.

Fig.17 Relief of Mahiṣāsuramardinī at Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, to the proper left of the entrance to Cave 6. Dated 401–02. Stone. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.18 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Late third century. Stone. 46.2 x 24.5 cm. bpk / Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Iris Papadopoulos.

Fig.19 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Durgā Temple in Aihole, Karnataka. Sixth century. Stone. Ht. 125 cm. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.20 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Ālampūr, Andhra Pradesh. Eighth century. Stone. 81 x 65 cm. Ālampūr Museum, Andhra Pradesh. Courtesy of the Archaeology and Museums Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.21 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa of Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Seventh century. Granite. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.22 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from the Trimūrti Maṇḍapa of Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Late seventh century. Granite. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.23 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Gardez, Afghanistan. Seventh or eighth century. Marble. Ht. ca. 60 cm. Used to be in the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.24 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Semarang, central Java, Indonesia. Eighth century. Stone. Ht. 77 cm. Museum Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta, inventory no.129. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

Fig.25 Eight-armed Benzaiten from the Hokkedō 法華堂 of Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara, Japan. Eighth century. Clay. Ht. 219 cm. Photograph from Asukaen 飛鳥園.

INTRODUCTION

The name Sarasvatī evokes images of the beautiful *vīṇā*-playing goddess of knowledge and recalls an ancient river that is now believed to flow underground, meeting the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā at the sacred confluence of Triveṇī at Prayāga/Allahabad.[1] The fair Sarasvatī embodies beauty, music, flowing water, but above all knowledge, and, as the presiding deity of knowledge, the goddess has been worshipped on a pan-Indian scale among Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists alike.

This study traces the development of Sarasvatī from her riverine origins as depicted in the earliest textual source on the goddess, the *Ṛg Veda* composed sometime after 1750 B.C.E., through to her establishment as the deity of all forms of knowledge in epic and early Puranic sources (up to the seventh century C.E.), as well as in the oldest surviving Hindu, Jain, and possibly Buddhist images (third to seventh century), to the goddess's depiction in the most significant Buddhist source on Sarasvatī, the *Sutra of Golden Light*, whose earliest extant redaction is from the beginning of the fifth century.

When I think back to what led me to this study of Sarasvatī, it was not my long-standing awareness of the goddess, either through the invocations of her that often appear at the beginning of Hindu texts, or through her images, or through the general knowledge of Sarasvatī that any student of Hinduism might have. Rather, my project originated in a roundabout sort of way, on my first visit to Japan in 1991, at the great Buddhist monastery of Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara. Here, in the Hokkedō 法華堂 Hall, amidst an extraordinary group of eighth-century images, were two severely damaged, large clay sculptures of Sarasvatī (Benzaiten 辯才天 'Eloquence Talent Deity'; see fig.25) and Lakṣmī (Kichijōten 吉祥天 'Good Fortune Deity'). Throughout this trip I was intrigued by the frequent appearances of originally Hindu deities, and my wish to know how they had made their way to Japan and so dramatically metamorphosed in the process eventually led to the decision to work on one of them, the goddess Sarasvatī, tracing her from India to Japan. My doc-

[1] The term *vīṇā* refers to different types of harps, lutes, and zithers (see pp.227–28, 230 below). The varieties of *vīṇā* associated with Sarasvatī are the ancient *kacchapī* (lute with pear-shaped body) and the *Sarasvatī vīṇā* (large, long-necked plucked lute).

toral dissertation on this topic, entitled "From Sarasvatī to Benzaiten," was submitted at the University of Toronto in Canada in 2001. The present study is a reworked and expanded version of the Indian section of my thesis, including also translations and analyses of Chinese renderings from no longer extant Sanskrit versions of the *Sutra of Golden Light.*

The Indian Sarasvatī has been the subject of a number of studies, which may be divided into three broad categories: textual, art historical, and a combination of the two. On the textual side, short discussions are included in Arthur Anthony Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology* (1897, pp.86–88), Alfred Hillebrandt's *Vedische Mythologie* (1927–29 [2nd ed.], vol.2, pp.335–40), Arthur Berriedale Keith's *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads* (1925, vol.1, pp.172–74), and E. Washburn Hopkins's *Epic Mythology* (1915, see index). Puranic studies came later, primarily with Anand Swarup Gupta's articles (1962, 1966). More sizeable, book-length discussions appeared in the 1970s and 1980s: Raghunath Airi (*Concept of Sarasvatī [In Vedic Literature]*, 1977) and Jan Gonda (*Pūṣan and Sarasvatī*, 1985) published Vedic studies, while Mohammed Israil Khan (*Sarasvatī in Sanskrit Literature*, 1978) produced a general study of Sarasvatī in Sanskrit sources. On the art historical side, notable contributions include short discussions in Nalini K. Bhattasali's *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (1929, pp.181–90) and Jitendra Nath Banerjea's *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (1956, pp.376–80), as well as in Umakant P. Shah's article on the "Iconography of the Jain Goddess Sarasvatī" (1941). There have also been articles dealing with specific images (e.g., Bajpai 1946). Two general studies on Sarasvatī combining both textual and art historical material appeared back to back: Kanailal Bhattacharyya's *Sarasvatī: A Study of her Concept and Iconography* was published in 1983, and Niranjan Ghosh's *Śrī Sarasvatī in Indian Art and Literature* in 1984. Although very general, Bhattacharyya's volume is by far and in every way the better of the two.

My study may be distinguished from the ones listed above in a number of respects. Like Bhattacharyya and Ghosh, I combine textual and art historical approaches, but I have attempted a more in-depth, comprehensive, and critical treatment of my sources in their respective historical, political, and social contexts. I have not limited myself to collecting textual references to Sarasvatī and listing her images: I have studied, for instance, developing themes/stories by examining their sources and each of their retellings within groups of texts; I have addressed why and how changes in the conceptualization of Sarasvatī occur, as evidenced by textual and art historical material, in the socio-politico-historical circumstances of the times; I have, furthermore, questioned both the identification of images that have until now been called 'Sarasvatī,' as well as the dates assigned to them. Moreover, the third part, on the Buddhist Sarasvatī, consists of a detailed study of the Sarasvatī chapter of the Buddhist *Sutra of Golden Light* in the extant Sanskrit, as well as in Chinese translations from no longer existing Sanskrit versions. This sutra, even in the Sanskrit, has not been used until now for the study of the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī. There are no works that I know of on the Chinese Buddhist Sarasvatī (Biancaitian), and while the very modest number of publications on the Japanese form of the goddess (Benzaiten) are at least aware of this chapter in the sutra, none provides a thorough analysis of its contents.[2] The *Sutra of Golden Light* and its Chinese translations offer a wealth of information not found elsewhere on the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī, including also on her interactions with other Indian goddess cults—interactions which turned out to have a determining effect on her East Asian form. The Sarasvatī chapter of the sutra is therefore extensively discussed in this part of my study.

The conceptual development of Sarasvatī is examined in the present work through textual sources, artistic representations, and inscriptions. The time period covered stretches from sometime after 1750 B.C.E. with the *Ṛg Veda*, the earliest textual source on the goddess Sarasvatī, to ca. 700 C.E. with the early Purāṇas and images of the goddess, as well as with the last Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* by Yijing in 703.

As Sarasvatī is a river goddess, my study touches on issues of geography as reflected in Vedic to epic textual sources. The features of the river are lauded by the poets of the *Ṛg Veda*, and her course is delineated in some of the Brāhmaṇas and, in much more detail, in the *Mahābhārata*. While I deal with 'textual geography,' I am not qualified to enter into the

[2] For an overview of studies on Benzaiten, see Ludvik 2001, pp.2–3. I have discussed the Chinese and Japanese forms of the goddess in my dissertation (2001), pp.197–226, 245–94. Existing studies of the Sarasvatī chapter of the sutra concern the bath, primarily the list of herbs, taught by the goddess (Nobel 1951; Maue and Sertkaya 1986 and 1991; Gummer 2000, pp.239–56; Suzuki 2004, p.939). Gummer's study, moreover, addresses the eloquence of the goddess, and its relationship to the bath she teaches. Summaries of the contents of the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, furthermore, appear in Chandra 1999-2005 (vol.11, pp.3194–95) and Suzuki 2004. See also Shaw 2006, pp.234ff., who refers to the sutra in connection with the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī.

long-standing discussions of 'map geography' or geology: I do not try to identify either the changing course of the river, its location on the map, or the places on the Sarasvatī's banks mentioned in textual sources. The Sarasvatī was a far mightier river, at least in pre-Vedic times, than during epic and subsequent periods. Much has been written over the last century and many conflicting hypotheses proposed to identify the 'lost' Sarasvatī and to explain the desiccation of the region.[3] The most recent studies, as far as I am aware, indicate that the river flowed from the Himalayas through the present Ghaggar-Hakra bed in Panjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Bahawalpur (Pakistan), and then through the Nara bed in Sind (Pakistan), and finally debouched into the sea at the present Rann of Kutch.[4] As discussed by Yash Pal and others, environmental changes occurred, and since the Sarasvatī's channel was structurally controlled by faults, tectonic factors assumed greater importance, bringing about widespread changes in the configuration of river channels. As a result, it has been argued that the Sarasvatī as described in the *Mahābhārata* is either the same river, although much transformed, as the one praised by the poets of the Vedas, or another river bearing its name. At any rate, my treatment of the river Sarasvatī here is limited to its depiction in Vedic and epic sources.

My study is divided into four parts: I. Vedic Sarasvatī, II. Epic and Puranic Sarasvatī, III. Buddhist Sarasvatī, and IV. Images of Sarasvatī. The first three parts are textual studies (Vedic, Epic and Puranic, Buddhist), while the fourth one discusses art historical representations.

The first part on the Vedic Sarasvatī revolves around the gradual transformation of the river goddess into the goddess of knowledge, examining the depiction of Sarasvatī in the *Ṛg*, the *Atharva*, and the *Yajur Veda Saṃhitā*, as well as in the Brāhmaṇas. The Epic and Puranic Sarasvatī draws on the *Mahābhārata* and the early Purāṇas, addressing, in the epic, the mythology of the river and its fords (*tīrtha*), and the definitive establishment of Sarasvatī as goddess of knowledge, and taking up, in the Purāṇas, the fully-developed Brahmā-Sarasvatī myth, in addition to the names, worship, and iconography of the goddess. The Buddhist

[3] Oldham 1893, Das Gupta 1955, Godbole 1961, Indras 1967, to name but a few. For further references see Pal, Sahai, Sood, and Agrawal 1984; Possehl 1999; Radhakrishnan and Merh 1999.

[4] Sahai, "Unraveling of the 'Lost' Vedic Sarasvati" in Radhakrishnan and Merh 1999, p.138. See also Pal, Sahai, Sood, Agrawal 1984; and other articles in Radhakrishnan and Merh 1999. It is to be noted, however, that not everyone agrees on the Sarasvatī river flowing all the way to the sea: see Possehl 1999, pp.368, 372–77.

Sarasvatī centers on the contents of the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light* in the extant Sanskrit and in Chinese translations. The threefold depiction of the goddess as a deity of eloquence, as one who teaches a ritual bath, and as a battle goddess are discussed. The fourth and final part turns to art historical evidence: in its first half, early Hindu, Jain, and possibly Buddhist images of Sarasvatī are introduced and examined, whereas its second half takes up representations bearing iconographic similarity to the eight-armed battle goddess of the *Sutra of Golden Light* invoked as Sarasvatī. Through both textual and art historical sources, the present study traces the conceptual development of its 'presiding deity' Sarasvatī, goddess of knowledge, from the riverine origins of the manuscript-carrying *vīṇā*-player to the weapon-wielding defender of the Dharma of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

PART ONE

VEDIC SARASVATĪ

VEDIC LITERATURE

The earliest known texts in which Sarasvatī appears are the Veda Saṃhitās, composed in an area covering modern-day Afghanistan, the Panjab and surroundings, and stretching eastwards with the later Saṃhitās over northern India.[1] Their compilation was initiated in the twelfth century B.C.E. by the Kuru kings of eastern Panjab/western Uttar Pradesh, who suddenly appear in early post-Ṛg-Vedic texts.[2]

As is well known, the *Ṛg Veda* (RV) is the oldest of the Saṃhitās. Although composed sometime after 1750 B.C.E., as a collection of ten books (*maṇḍala*, lit. circle), it dates from about the twelfth century B.C.E.[3] The *Ṛg Veda* consists of 1028 hymns (*sūkta*) arranged in these ten books. The *Sāma Veda* is a compilation of certain verses of the *Ṛg Veda*, arranged for recitation in ritual performances. As it does not contain any new material on Sarasvatī, it will not be taken up here. The *Atharva Veda* (AV) is in parts as old as the *Ṛg Veda*, but the grammatical forms indicate a younger age than the *Ṛg Veda*. Michael Witzel assigns the composition of the *Atharva Veda* to the twelfth century B.C.E. Although it also includes philosophically speculative portions, the *Atharva Veda* is in many ways a practical text intended to deal with the problems of everyday life, from health difficulties to love, marriage, happiness, and prosperity, by way of magical charms. The liturgical *Yajur Veda*, composed from about the twelfth to the ninth century B.C.E., was compiled a few centuries later than the *Ṛg Veda*. As Jan Gonda points out,[4] it was amongst the exponents of this text that the methods of sacrificial practice were developed. Although tradition has it that there were one hundred and one schools of the *Yajur Veda*, collections from five of the schools survive: the earliest are the *Maitrāyaṇī* (MS) and the *Kāṭhaka* (KāṭhS) *Saṃhitā*, followed by the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha* (only fragmentary: about half of the original) (KapS) and the *Taittirīya* (TS) *Saṃhitā*, all belonging to the Black *Yajur Veda*; the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (VS), on the other hand, be-

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1 See maps in Witzel 1989, pp.242–43 for regions specific to the *Ṛg*, the *Atharva*, and the *Yajur Veda*.

2 Witzel 1995, p.14.

3 I follow Witzel's chronological chart in 1989, pp.249–51.

4 Gonda 1975, p.323.

longs to the White *Yajur Veda*. The distinction between the so-called Black (*Kṛṣṇa*) *Yajur Veda* and the White (*Śukla*) *Yajur Veda* rests in the inclusion of Brāhmaṇa-type explanatory material in the former, which is consequently viewed as 'not arranged.'[5]

The Brāhmaṇas, enormous appendices to the Veda Saṃhitās, are commentaries, written in prose, on rituals. They are assigned to a period between 900–500 B.C.E. The Brāhmaṇa material of the Black *Yajur Veda* belongs to this category. Apart from the Black *Yajur Veda* Saṃhitās noted above, we will look at passages from the *Śatapatha* (ŚB), the *Taittirīya* (TB), the *Aitareya* (AiB), the *Pañcaviṃśa* (PB), the *Jaiminīya* (JB), the *Kauṣītaki* (KauṣB), and the *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa*.

The Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, appendices in turn to the Brāhmaṇas, hardly mention Sarasvatī, and hence will not be discussed here.

Between the old Vedic period represented by the *Ṛg Veda* and the late Vedic period of the late Brāhmaṇas and early Upaniṣads, considerable changes can be detected in the geographical area, political set-up, society, as well as texts and ritual.[6] Geographically, the *Ṛg Veda* indicates an area covering modern-day Afghanistan, the Panjab and surroundings up to the Yamunā river, while the late Vedic period attests to a shift eastward, stretching over all of northern India from the Kabul river (Gandhāra) in the west to Bengal in the east, northeast Maharashtra, and Andhra in the south. Politically, the fifty or so continuously conflicting smaller tribes and aborigines (*dasyu*) are replaced by two major groups, the Kuru-Pañcāla and Kosala-Videha, in an area divided into sixteen kingdoms. Socially, the chieftains (*rājan*) of the early Vedic period rule over the nobility (*rājanya/kṣatriya*) and the common folk (*viś*), not to mention the aborigines and servants/slaves (*dāsa*, *dasyu*, *puruṣa*). By the late Vedic period, society is stratified into the three classes (*varṇa*) of the twice-born (*ārya* 'noble') and the class of the aborigines (*śūdra*). In terms of texts and ritual, in the *Ṛg Veda* period the gods are called on to attend sacrifices, where they are fed and praised by inspired poets who compose hymns, which are then collected by families and clans. The much more complex late-Vedic-period ritual is accompanied by these hymns of old, and literature that explains the sacrifices is composed.

[5] See Gonda 1975, p.324 and Winternitz 1972 (English translation repr. of 1904–20 original), vol.1, pp.148–49.

[6] Witzel 1989, pp.249–51; 1995, pp.4–5.

CHAPTER ONE

ṚG VEDA

Sarasvatī appears in many verses of the *Ṛg Veda*, and is invoked, in particular, in three hymns: while 6:61 is entirely dedicated to her, she shares 7:95–96 with her male counterpart Sarasvant, to whom are addressed a few of the stanzas (7:95:3; 7:96:4–6). He is a somewhat nebulous figure, a male river god obviously corresponding to Sarasvatī. In 1:164:52, he appears, more generally, as a water genie connected or identified with Apāṃ Napāt, the son of the Waters.[1] In post-Ṛg-Vedic literature, Sarasvant forms a pair with Sarasvatī.[2]

In the *Ṛg Veda*, Sarasvatī is a deified river representing abundance and might. She is associated above all with the Waters (Āpas) and the Storm Gods (Maruts), and forms a triad with the sacrificial goddesses Iḷā and Bhāratī. Subsequent developments in her conceptualization are rooted in her *Ṛg Veda* connection with inspired thought (*dhī́*), which in turn is linked to the sacrificial activity on the banks of the sacred river Sarasvatī.

1. River Goddess

1.1 *Mighty Flood*

Sarasvatī is described as a powerful river, surpassing all others in her activity (6:61:13b *apásām apástamā*). She roars with energy (6:61:8c)[3] like a bull, bellows (*vāvaśānā́* 7:36:6a) like a cow,[4] and snorts ragingly like a boar (6:61:2ab):

[1] For Sarasvant, see Hillebrandt 1927–29, vol.1, p.380 (1981, vol.1, pp.237–39); Geldner 1951, vol.2, p.265, note on 7:95:3; Gonda 1985, p.7, note 20.

[2] For the Brāhmaṇas, see p.57 below. Cf. the *Mahābhārata*'s Sārasvata as Sarasvatī's son, pp.109–11 below.

[3] Literally, she "whose impetuosity keeps roaring": *yásyāḥ ... ámaś cárati róruvat* (6:61:8bc).

[4] Rivers are often compared to cows (e.g., 3:33:1cd; 10:75:4ab [p.30 below]). See Gonda 1985, pp.39ff.

iyáṁ śúṣmebhir bisakhā́ ivārujat
sā́nu girīṇā́ṃ taviṣébhir ūrmíbhiḥ /

With enraged snorting, like one who digs up lotus roots,[5] this one broke the back of mountains with [her] strong waves.

Uncontrollable by nature, she reveals [herself as] a mighty flood (1:3:12ab): *mahó árṇaḥ sárasvatī prá cetayati ketúnā /*. Taken predicatively, this great flood is Sarasvatī's ensign (*ketú*), by which she is characterized.[6] As fire is known by smoke, Sarasvatī is known by the strength and volume of her waters. She is thus identified not only by water as such, but by water in uncontrollable, impetuous, raging movement, roaring with life. Swelling with her own waters (*abhí svéna páyasā pī́pyānāḥ // *),[7] she comes down from the mountains to meet the ocean (*śúcir yatī́ giríbhya ā́ samudrā́t / *).[8]

Seven-sistered (*saptásvasar*)[9] Sarasvatī is praised as the most riverly (*nádītama*)[10] and as the divine one from amongst the rivers (*asuryā̀*

[5] Karl Hoffmann (1975–76, vol.2, p.337) identifies this with a boar: "Sie ... durchbrach wie ein wurzelgrabender (Eber) den Rücken der Berge mit tosenden machtvollen Wogen" ("She ... broke through the backs of the mountains like a root-digger [boar] with boisterous, mighty waves").

[6] I follow Werner Knobl's suggestion here (personal communication). Geldner's translation (1951, vol.1, p.4) of *ketúnā* as 'mit ihrem Banner' ('with her banner') renders the passage entirely unclear. *Ketú* is derived from *cit*, and thus is, as Renou (EVP vol.1, p.7) explains, "proprement le signe permettant de 'comprendre' " ("literally the sign that allows 'understanding' "). In hymns to Uṣas (Dawn), the term often appears as a luminous signal and a sign of recognition (EVP vol.3, p.32). In its illuminating quality, *ketú* is thus the sign which makes recognition possible. See also EVP vol.2, pp.71, 73, 85; vol.7, p.47.

[7] 7:36:6d. Renou (EVP vol.4, p.99) explains that the association *páyasā pī́pyānāḥ* reflects an ancient etymology: "gonflant de leur gonflement" ("swelling with their swelling").

[8] 7:95:2b "going as a pure one from the mountains to the ocean" (Renou, EVP vol.15, p.133: "allant pure des montagnes à l'océan"). *Śúcir* refers to the purity of her waters.

[9] 6:61:10b. In 7:36:6b she is said to be the seventh (*saptáthī*). As Heinrich Lüders (1951, pp.163ff.) observes, throughout the ages in India, the names of rivers with a numeral, seven in particular, have been used to indicate the country's river system. From a purely mathematical point of view, however, to call her *saptásvasar* is to say that there are, all together, eight sisters. Nevertheless, as Whitney (1889, pp.502–03, §1294b) and Wackernagel and Debrunner (1896–1954, vol.2:1, pp.273–74) explain, there is a particular kind of *bahuvrīhi* in the older language which implies "the relation of appurtenance" (Whitney 1889, p.502). Thus the one who is said to be seven-sistered may be included in the seven. The *saptásvasar* as rivers are also referred to in 8:41:2de (*yáḥ síndhūnām úpodayé saptásvasā sá madhyamó*), where Varuṇa appears amongst them. In this case, he is clearly not one of the seven, but rather one who has seven sisters, and thus would be counted as an eighth sibling.

[10] 2:41:16a.

nadī́nām),[11] "pressing forward by [her] greatness all the other waters," (*prabā́badhānā ... víśvā apó mahinā́ ... anyā́ḥ // *).[12] Inexhaustible plenitude in liquid form, she fills the earthly [spaces] and the wide space in between (*āpaprúṣī pā́rthivāny urú rájo antárikṣam / *).[13]

Sarasvatī, it is clear, is no ordinary earthly river. She is from the high heaven (5:42:12c *sárasvatī bṛhaddivā́*),[14] we are told, and it is from this high heaven, from the mountain, that she is asked to descend to attend a sacrifice (5:43:11ab): *ā́ no divó bṛhatáḥ párvatād ā́ sárasvatī yajatā́ gantu yajñám /*. According to Witzel,[15] Sarasvatī is the Milky Way as it was known in the *Ṛg Veda*. Around the time of the winter solstice, when in the east the Milky Way divides into two branches, the Sarasvatī, Witzel explains, was perceived as flowing from heaven, her "two branches touching the north-eastern horizon, the 'gate' of heaven."[16]

[11] 7:96:1b.

[12] 7:95:1cd.

[13] 6:61:11ab. Although *urv àntárikṣam* occurs several times in the *Ṛg Veda* (e.g., 3:22:2c; 3:54:19d), *urú rájas* appears only here. *Urú* means 'wide,' and *rájas*, 'atmosphere.' Thus Renou (EVP vol.5, p.132) takes *urú rájo antárikṣam* as an enlargement of the usual formula *urv àntárikṣam*, and renders it as "le vaste espace, (à savoir) l'espace-médian" ("vast space, [that is to say,] the middle space"). Geldner's reading (1951, vol.2, p.163) as "Die irdischen (Räume), den weiten Raum, das Luftreich ..." ("the earthly [spaces], the wide space, the aerial realm ...") might suggest the sky for *urú rájas*, and yet *rájas* is not the sky, but rather the misty atmosphere around the earth. At any rate, it is not entirely clear what Geldner had in mind by 'wide space.' It is not insignificant, however, that in the immediately following stanza (6:61:12a), Sarasvatī is said to abide in three places (*triṣadhásthā*): perhaps the *pārthivāni*, *urú rájas*, and *antárikṣam*.

[14] It should be noted that f. *bṛhaddivā́* may be the name of a goddess. I follow Renou's reading here as "Sarasvatī (venue) du haut du ciel" ("Sarasvatī [having come] from high heaven") in EVP vol.5, p.23. Cf. RV 5:41:19 translated in EVP vol.5, p.21 and RV 10:64:10 translated in EVP vol.5, p.56. Only in one of the four *Ṛg Veda* occurrences of f. *bṛhaddivā́* does he, like Geldner (1951, vol.1, p.315 for 2:31:4; vol.2, p.42 for 5:41:19; vol.2, p.44 for 5:42:12; vol.3, p.236 for 10:64:10), render the word as the name of the goddess Bṛhaddivā (2:31:4 translated in EVP vol.5, p.11), and yet even in the case of 2:31:4 Renou adds in a note (EVP vol.4, p.42) that it may not be a distinct divine name. Although Bergaigne (1963, vol.1, p.319) takes it as the name of a goddess, he is quick to mention that it seems to mean "qui habite le haut du ciel" ("who inhabits high heaven"), which implies an adjectival meaning. On the other hand, while Ludwig (1876, vol.1, p.222, no.206 for 5:42:12; vol.1, p.260, no.238 for 10:64:10) takes two of the four occurrences as a proper name, Grassmann (1873, p.914) and Roth (Böhtlingk-Roth 1855–75, vol.5, p.116) unequivocally understand the f. *bṛhaddivā́* as the name of a goddess. It must also be mentioned, however, that m. *bṛhaddivá-* is found once in the plural (10:66:8b *bṛhaddivā́s*) and that there is a *bahuvrīhi* compound *bṛháddiva-* (with typical *bahuvrīhi* intonation on the first member) used adjectivally in the sense of "belonging to the high heaven" occurring eight times in the *Ṛg Veda*.

[15] Witzel 1984, pp.217–18.

[16] Witzel 1995, pp.15–16. For a discussion, see Witzel 1984, esp. pp.222–24 and figs.3c, 6.

1.2 *Abundance and Might*

Rituals were performed on the banks of the Sarasvatī. Vedic religion centered on the sacred fire into which offerings were placed, as hymns were recited. Indeed, Sarasvatī's banks, the *Ṛg Veda* (3:23:4) tells us, were amongst the best places on earth to establish one's sacred fire:

> *ní tvā dadhe vára ā́ pṛthivyā́*
> *iḷāyās padé sudinatvé áhnām /*
> *dṛṣádvatyāṃ mā́nuṣa āpayā́yāṁ*
> *sárasvatyāṁ revád agne didīhi //*

> I set thee down in the earth's choicest [place],
> in Iḷā's footstep, on the best of days.
> On the Dṛṣadvatī, amongst Manu's [people],[17] on the Āpayā,
> on the Sarasvatī shine richly, O Agni.

Worshipped by those dwelling on her banks (e.g., the Pūrus in 7:96:2ab), Sarasvatī is invoked as the most motherly (*ámbitame*)[18] and as dear amongst the dear ones (*priyā́ priyā́su*).[19] In the eyes of her devotees, her liquid abundance in the form of overflowing waters originating in high heaven embodies wealth in the widest sense (1:164:49):

> *yás te stánaḥ śaśayó yó mayobhū́r*
> *yéna víśvā púṣyasi vā́ryāṇi /*
> *yó ratnadhā́ vasuvíd yáḥ sudátraḥ*
> *sárasvati tám ihá dhā́tave kaḥ //*

> Your breast which is abundant, which is refreshing,
> with which you make all choice things thrive,
> which is providing treasures, finding goods, whose gifts are good,
> make [us] suck that here, O Sarasvatī.[20]

In their hymns, calling to mind how in the past Sarasvatī had bestowed her gifts on others,[21] her worshippers invoke her, requesting for everything under the sun, from wealth,[22] vitality,[23] and progeny[24] to pleasure,[25] fame,[26] and, very importantly for her later identification with speech, inspired thought.[27] As a life-giver and sustainer, Sarasvatī is asked to place the embryo in a woman's womb,[28] and she is also identified as the one who makes the five generations grow.[29]

While the volume of her waters represents abundance, the uncontrollability and overwhelming vigour of her flood embodies her frightful strength. The mighty river goddess is called on for protection and shelter (6:49:7cd):

> *gnā́bhir ácchidraṁ śaraṇáṁ sajóṣā*
> *durādhárṣaṃ gṛṇaté śárma yaṁsat //*

> Together with the wives of gods, unbroken refuge
> she shall grant the singer, protection which is difficult to assail.

Even in the singer's supplication for protection, Sarasvatī's might and invincibility dominate. Words such as *ácchidra*, 'unbroken,' i.e., unbreakable, and *durādhárṣa*, 'difficult to assail,' that is, unconquerable, are used, reflecting her ensign, the mighty flood. It is not simply her compassion which is invoked, but rather her compassionate strength. Perhaps behind expressions like *priyā́ priyā́su* lies a certain fear of an all-too-powerful, uncontrollable mother, whose violent energy, it is hoped, might be mercifully directed.

Like her wild, raging waters, this mother takes on a fierce, awful (*ghorā́*) appearance.[30] She who remains mighty and unassailable as a stronghold, as a metal rampart (*sárasvatī dharúṇam ā́yasī pū́ḥ*),[31] is asked to conquer the enemies of her loved ones (*jeṣi śátrūn*).[32] She is called a slayer of strangers (*pārāvataghnī́*),[33] and her violent aggression is described in no uncertain terms (6:61:8a–9a):

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[17] In the *Ṛg Veda*, six out of nine times the locative *mā́nuṣe* is connected with *jáne* (1:48:11b; 5:14:2c; 5:21:2a; 6:16:1c; 8:64:10a; 10:118:9c), once with *vṛjáne* (1:128:7a).

[18] 2:41:16a.

[19] 6:61:10a.

[20] This stanza is discussed on pp.31–32 below.

[21] For instance, she is said to have given Nāhuṣa ghee and milk (7:95:2d *ghṛtáṃ páyo duduhe nā́huṣāya //*), and to Vadhryaśva a son called Divodāsa (6:61:1b *dívodāsaṃ vadhryaśvā́ya dāśúṣe /*).

[22] 3:54:13d *dhā́tā rayíṃ ... //.*

[23] 10:30:12d *sárasvatī tád gṛṇaté váyo dhāt //.*

[24] 2:41:17d *prajā́ṃ devi didiḍḍhi naḥ //.*

[25] 1:89:3d *sárasvatī naḥ subhágā máyas karat //.*

[26] 2:41:16d *práśastim amba nas kṛdhi //.*

[27] 6:49:7b *sárasvatī vīrápatnī dhíyaṃ dhāt /.*

[28] 10:184:2b *gárbhaṃ dhehi sarasvati /* (= AV 5:25:3b).

[29] 6:61:12b *páñca jātā́ vardháyantī /.* The neuter *jātā́* 'generations' is not to be confused with tribes, as, for instance, Macdonell and Keith (1912, vol.2, pp.435–36) have done. In the *Ṛg Veda*, the five tribes, as discussed by Bernfried Schlerath (1960, pp.28ff.), are referred to as the *páñca kṣitáyaḥ* (e.g., 1:176:3b), *páñca carṣaṇáyaḥ* (e.g., 5:86:2c), *páñca kṛṣṭáyaḥ* (e.g., 2:2:10c), and *páñca janā́saḥ* or *janā́ḥ* (e.g., 1:89:10c), but not as the *páñca jātā́ni.*

[30] 6:61:7b.

[31] 7:95:1b. In the *Ṛg Veda*, *púr* (f.) is not a citadel, but a rampart, a wall. See Thieme 1970, p.448 (repr. 1995, p.816).

[32] 2:30:8b. See also 6:61:7c *vṛtraghnī́*, an epithet discussed on pp.47–48 below.

[33] 6:61:2c. Geldner (1951, vol.2, p.163) renders *pārāvataghnī́* as 'die die Fremden

yásyā anantó áhrutas tveṣáś cariṣṇúr arṇaváḥ /
ámaś cárati róruvat //
sā́ no víśvā áti dvíṣaḥ

She whose unlimited, impossible to divert, fearsome, mobile, surging aggressive impulse, advances, forcefully roaring,
it is she who [has made] us [pass] beyond all hostilities.[34]

Moreover, Sarasvatī is the slayer of the foe within, for she is called on to guard her devotees against slander: *sárasvatī nidás pātu* (6:61:11c).

2. Water

2.1 *Sarasvatī and the Āpas*

Sarasvatī, as a river, finds her most obvious connection—deepened even further with time—with the never-resting (*ánaviśamānāḥ*) Waters (Āpas),[35] to whom four entire hymns of the *Ṛg Veda* (7:47, 49; 10:9, 30) and many of its verses are dedicated. Sarasvatī is one of them, and appears in RV 10:30:12 as their representative:

ā́po revatīḥ kṣáyathā hí vásvaḥ
krátuṃ ca bhadráṃ bibhṛthā́mṛ́taṃ ca /
rāyáś ca sthá svapatyásya pátnīḥ
sárasvatī tád gṛṇaté váyo dhāt //

O rich Waters, since you have command over the good,
since you carry [within you] auspicious resolve and immortality,

abwehrt' ('who wards off the strangers'), but adds in a note that it could also refer to the Pārāvatas as a proper name of a people. Likewise, Renou (EVP vol.15, p.131) is not quite sure about *pārāvata*, but thinks it is probably a proper name. He does mention, however, referring to other passages (5:52:11 'ceux d'un domaine lointain' ['those from a faraway homeland']; AV 20:135:11), that it is more likely a non-proper name. Böhtlingk-Roth's (1855–75, vol.4, p.673) definition of the Pārāvatas, reiterated by Monier-Williams (1899, p.620), as a tribe living on the banks of the river Yamunā may reflect a later, particularized understanding of the term. Hillebrandt (1927–29, repr. 1965, vol.1, p.278) and Macdonell and Keith (1912, vol.1, pp.518–19; vol.2, p.436) also take the Pārāvatas to be a people.

[34] Based on Renou's French translation in EVP vol.15, p.132: "Elle dont l'élan-offensif illimité, impossible à faire dévier, redoutable, mobile, fluctuant, avance en hurlant-avec-force, c'est elle qui nous (a fait passer) outre à toutes hostilités ..." Boris Oguibénine's (1988, p.209) understanding of Sarasvatī as a protective deity of poets, intervening on their behalf and destroying their rivals in competitions is too limited a view of her aggression, as the above passages clearly show. For further discussion of Sarasvatī's aggressive aspect, see pp.22–23, 47–48 below.

[35] 7:49:1b.

[and] since you are mistresses of wealth consisting of good descent,
may Sarasvatī grant the singer this vital force.

The Waters are often called celestial (*devī́*),[36] and likened to loving mothers (*uśatī́r iva mātáraḥ //*).[37] Much as Sarasvatī, they bring food,[38] wealth,[39] strength,[40] and health.[41] Within the Waters, according to Soma, dwell all remedies (10:9:6ab *apsú me sómo abravīd antár víśvāni bheṣajā́ /*), and, consequently, they can cure diseases.[42] The Waters also carry away all defilements in the form of betrayal and of bearing false witness (10:9:8):

idám āpaḥ prá vahata yát kíṃ ca duritáṃ máyi /
yád vāhám abhidudróha yád vā śepá utā́nṛtam //

O Waters, convey afar that which is bad in me, whatever it may be,
that which I have committed by way of deceit or what I have sworn falsely.[43]

Just as the Sarasvatī runs clear (7:95:2b ***śúcir*** *yatī́* ...) and is pure (1:3:10a ***pāvakā́***),[44] the Waters too are clear and pure (7:49:3c *madhuścútaḥ* ***śúcayo*** *yā́ḥ* ***pāvakā́ḥ***), and thus are purifiers and healers by nature.

The Waters, like Sarasvatī from high heaven (5:42:12c), are both celestial and earthly (7:49:2):

yā́ āpo divyā́ utá vā srávanti
khanítrimā utá vā yā́ḥ svayaṃjā́ḥ /
samudrā́rthā yā́ḥ śúcayaḥ pāvakā́s
tā́ āpo devī́r ihá mā́m avantu //

The waters of the sky or those that flow,
those that are dug out or those that arise by themselves,
those pure and clear waters that seek the ocean as their goal—
let the waters, who are goddesses, help me here and now.[45]

[36] 7:49:1–4.

[37] 10:9:2c.

[38] 2:35:14c *ā́po náptre ghṛtám ánnaṃ váhantīḥ.*

[39] 10:30:14a *émā́ agman revátīr jīvádhanyā.*

[40] 10:9:1ab *ā́po hí ṣṭhā́ mayobhúvas tā́ na ūrjé dadhātana /.*

[41] 10:9:5c *apó yācāmi bheṣajám //.*

[42] 10:137:6cd *ā́paḥ sárvasya bheṣajī́s tā́s te kṛṇvantu bheṣajám //.* See also 10:9:5–7.

[43] English rendering of Renou's French translation in EVP vol.15, p.126: "O Eaux, convoyez au loin ce qui va mal en moi, quel qu'il soit, ce que j'aie-jamais commis-en-fait-de-dol ou que j'aie-jamais juré mensongèrement."

[44] Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.4, note on 1:3:10–11: "Sarasvatī als Göttin der sakralen Rede" ("Sarasvatī as goddess of sacred speech"). On 1:3:12: "als Flussgöttin" ("as river goddess").

[45] Translation by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty in 1981, p.232.

Just as they "are present in the luminous space beyond and beneath the sun" (*yā́ rocané parástāt sū́ryasya yā́ś cāvástād upatíṣṭhanta ā́paḥ //*),[46] Sarasvatī fills the realms of earth and the wide space in between, and is characterized as dwelling in three places (6:61:11–12a).

The Waters, however, are more potent as well as more powerful than Sarasvatī, for they, as the primeval Waters of creation, are the producers of all that is fixed and moves (*víśvasya sthātúr jágato jánitrīḥ //*),[47] even of sacrifice itself (*ā́po ... janáyantīr yajñám /*).[48] The very elixir of immortality (*amṛ́ta*) also comes from them (1:23:19a; 10:30:12ab).[49] Nevertheless, it should be noted here that 10:30:12 is the same stanza in which Sarasvatī appears as their representative, and therefore is, through them, likewise connected with *amṛ́ta*, and by extension, with the creative process itself.

2.2 Síndhumātar

Sarasvatī is also said to be one whose mother(s) is (are) the *síndhu* (*síndhumātar*).[50] The *síndhu*, however, may be a stream(s), a river(s), the ocean, or specifically the river Sindhu (Indus).[51] The last of these options, the Sindhu river, is most easily excluded because the Sarasvatī could neither have arisen from the Sindhu, nor even joined it at any

46 3:22:3cd.
47 6:50:7d.
48 10:121:8ab.
49 1:23:19a *apsv àntár amṛ́tam apsú bheṣajám*; 10:30:12ab *ā́po revatīḥ kṣáyathā hí vásvaḥ krátuṃ ca bhadráṃ bibhṛthā́mṛ́taṃ ca /*.
50 7:36:6b. With the accent on the first member, the compound is clearly a *bahuvrīhi*, as it was understood by Bergaigne (1963, vol.1, p.326), Geldner (1951, vol.2, p.218), Lüders (1951, vol.1, p.140), Oldenberg (1912, p.36), Renou (EVP vol.5, p.42), and others. Furthermore, as pointed out by Werner Knobl (personal communication), all *Ṛg Veda* compounds with *mātar* as a second member are *bahuvrīhi*, although in the case of combinations with *dvi*, *tri*, and *su*, the accent shifts to *mātár*. Sāyaṇa (Max Müller ed. of *Ṛg Veda*, vol.3, p.88), however, erroneously took this compound as a genitive *tatpuruṣa* 'mother of the *síndhu*,' stating that Sarasvatī is the mother of Waters in the form of rivers. Likewise Roth (Böhtlingk-Roth 1855–75, vol.7, p.1109), Grassmann (1873, p.1520), and Ludwig (1876, vol.1, p.241, no.221) all took this occurrence of *síndhumātar* as a genitive *tatpuruṣa*, as did Macdonell (1897, p.86), despite recognizing the accent on the first member (ibid., p.88, note 2 on §33). This same understanding reappears as well in more recent scholarly work on Sarasvatī (Khan 1978, pp.5, 37). For the three other occurrences of the compound *síndhumātar*, see p.21 below.
51 According to Grassmann (1873, p.1519), in the feminine it has the narrow sense of river or stream, and in the masculine it has the more general sense of flowing waters.

point, as shown by recent studies based on Landsat imagery.[52] It should also be underlined that the Sarasvatī is "more greatly celebrated than any other river,"[53] including the Sindhu, and hence it seems unlikely that a less extolled river should be conceived of as the mother of a more celebrated one.

The largest body of water in our list of possible candidates from which the Sarasvatī might have arisen is the ocean. Since, as we are told, the Sarasvatī flows from the mountains to the ocean (7:95:2b),[54] she could not have originated from an 'earthly' ocean. Thus some scholars, such as Bergaigne, Lommel, and Lüders, suggest the possibility of a 'celestial' ocean.[55]

The celestial ocean is connected with the Waters (Āpas), which are both earthly and celestial (e.g., 7:49:2).[56] As the primeval Waters of creation, they are the mothers of all that is fixed and moves (6:50:7d),[57] most manifestly of their counterparts in this world, the earthly waters. But if *síndhu* were interpreted as the Waters or even as the celestial ocean, should not all rivers, and not just the Sarasvatī, be called *síndhumātar*? If Sarasvatī is *saptásvasar* (6:61:10b), then her sisters would by implication also be *síndhumātara*.

Could the Sarasvatī have arisen from the smallest body of water on our list, a stream? For a sizeable river like the Sarasvatī, it would seem unlikely that a stream should be referred to as its mother. Nevertheless, even the largest river does emerge as a stream at its source. The understanding of *síndhu* as a stream, however, is necessarily excluded from Paul Thieme's interpretation of the term: he explains that as *síndhu* is derived from the root *sedh*/*sidh* (*sédhati*) 'to drive off, ward off, keep away,' it refers to a border river or sea, a natural frontier obstructing the progress of the enemy.[58] In such case, *síndhu* would obviously be a very considerable river. In 7:95:1, Sarasvatī herself is called a *síndhu*:

52 Pal, Sahai, Sood, and Agrawal 1984, pp.491–97. See also Radhakrishnan and Merh 1999. Grassmann (1873, p.1488) and Roth (Böhtlingk-Roth 1855-75, vol.7, p.785) considered the Sarasvatī and the Sindhu to be, quite probably, one and the same river. According to Roth, Sarasvatī was its sacred name and Sindhu, its secular one. Both the names Sindhu and Sarasvatī, however, appear side by side in lists of rivers (e.g., 10:64:9a *sárasvatī saráyuḥ síndhur ūrmíbhir*) and hence the two cannot be identified as one.
53 Macdonell 1897, p.86.
54 See p.12 above.
55 Bergaigne 1963, vol.1, p.326; Lommel 1954, p.409; Lüders 1951, vol.1, pp.133ff. (especially p.140). However, see also Kuiper 1972, who calls into question the theory of a celestial ocean.
56 See p.17 above.
57 See p.18 above.
58 Thieme 1970, p.448 (repr. 1995, p.816).

prá kṣódasā dhā́yasā sasra eṣā́
sárasvatī dharúṇam ā́yasī pū́ḥ /
prabā́badhānā rathyèva yāti
víśvā apó mahinā́ síndhur anyā́ḥ //

Sarasvatī has sprung forth with [her] flood, with [her] refreshment—
a fortification, an iron wall (rampart)—
a frontier[-river], pressing forward
by her greatness all the other waters, she goes [straight] like a highway.[59]

It is clear that in this stanza *síndhu* refers to one particular river—frontier or otherwise—namely the Sarasvatī, and that the *síndhu* of *síndhumātar* (7:36:6b) cannot be identical with Sarasvatī.

Síndhu is very commonly used to refer to rivers in general, and their number is often identified as seven (*saptá síndhavaḥ*).[60] As Heinrich Lüders explains, the names of rivers with a numeral, seven in particular, have been used to indicate the country's river system.[61] If *saptá síndhavaḥ* refers to India's river system as a whole, then at least in these instances where *síndhu* appears with the numeral seven, the meaning of *síndhu* cannot be limited to a frontier-type river suggested by Thieme.

Rivers in general are frequently referred to as mothers (*mātṝ́n síndhūn* ...),[62] and the Sarasvatī, who is one of them, is praised as the most motherly and the most riverly (*ámbitame nadī́tame*).[63] In 1:34:8a, as Renou points out,[64] *síndhubhiḥ saptámātṛbhiḥ* is an enlargement of the phrase *saptá síndhavaḥ* based on the association that was established between the words 'river' and 'mother.' The seven rivers (*saptá síndhavaḥ*) would then be the abbreviated version of the rivers that are seven mothers or the seven mother-rivers (1:34:8a *síndhubhiḥ saptámātṛbhiḥ*). And if the seven rivers indicate the country's river system, the meaning of the extended version of the phrase would be that all rivers are mothers.

The *bahuvrīhi* compound *síndhumātar* as applied to Sarasvatī in 7:36:6b may be, in meaning, singular or plural, in that Sarasvatī may have either a river for mother, or plural rivers for mothers. I would suggest the plural meaning, which opens up the possibility of interpreting

59 Translation by Thieme in 1970, p.448 (repr. 1995, p.816). I have added the word 'other' because *anyā́ḥ* had been left untranslated.
60 1:32:12d; 1:35:8b; 2:12:3a; 2:12:12b; 4:28:1c; 8:24:27b; 8:54:4b; 8:69:12b; 9:66:6a; 10:43:3c; 10:67:12c.
61 Lüders 1951, pp.163ff.
62 10:35:2b.
63 2:41:16a.
64 Renou, EVP vol.16, p.3.

the compound as a *bahuvrīhi* of appurtenance: Sarasvatī, whose mothers are the rivers, may be included as one amongst these mother-rivers. Through this interpretation, the *síndhumātar* problem is redefined. It is no longer a question of who/what specifically the mother of Sarasvatī might be, but rather of identifying Sarasvatī's role as mother, which she shares with all rivers. We have already seen this *bahuvrīhi* of appurtenance in her role as sister: seven-sistered (*saptásvasar*) Sarasvatī in 6:61:10b could likewise be explained as one of her seven sisters, presumably seven rivers representing all rivers.[65] The rivers are sisters to one another and mothers in relation to others.

In the very same *pāda* in which Sarasvatī is referred to as *síndhumātar*, she is also called the seventh, *saptáthī*: *sárasvatī sáptathī síndhumātā /* (7:36:6b), a formulation remarkably close to *síndhubhiḥ saptámātṛbhiḥ* of 1:34:8a. She is one of seven sister-rivers, the seventh, and in relation to others one of the seven mother-rivers.

Besides Sarasvatī, it might be noted that the epithet *síndhumātar* is also applied to the Aśvins (*yā́ dasrā́ síndhumātarā*),[66] to Soma (*mṛjánti síndhumātaram /*),[67] and to the Maruts (*grā́vāṇo ná sūráyaḥ síndhumātara*).[68] Evidently in these cases the epithet cannot be understood as a *bahuvrīhi* of appurtenance. The intended meaning, I think, is simply that the rivers are mothers to the Aśvins, to Soma, and to the Storm Gods.[69]

65 See note 9 above.
66 1:46:2a.
67 9:61:7b.
68 10:78:6a. In the three above instances, the accent remains on the first member, and thus they are to be read as *bahuvrīhi*. Interestingly enough, although Grassmann (1873, p.1520), Ludwig (1876, vol.1, p.30, no.24; vol.2, p.456, no.851; vol.2, p.323, no.705), Macdonell (1897, p.86), and Roth (Böhtlingk-Roth 1855–75, vol.7, p.1109) all took *síndhumātar* in 7:36:6b as a genitive *tatpuruṣa*, they interpreted the same compound with the same accent in 1:46:2a, 9:61:7b, and 10:78:6a as *bahuvrīhi*. Likewise, they understood other compounds with *mātar* as the second member and accent on the first member, such as *pṛ́śnimātar* (1:23:10c; 1:85:2d; 5:59:6c; 8:7:3b; 9:34:5b) and *gómātar* (1:85:3a) which are applied to the Storm Gods, as *bahuvrīhi* (Grassmann 1873, pp.413, 859; Ludwig 1876, vol.1, p.268, no.244; vol.2, p.288, no.677; vol.2, p.307, no.693; vol.2, p.316, no.701; vol.2, p.442, no.824; Macdonell 1897, p.78; Böhtlingk-Roth 1855–75, vol.2, p.810; vol.4, p.867).
69 It should be noted that the Storm Gods are also identified as *pṛ́śnimātar* (e.g., 1:23:10c) and *gómātar* (1:85:3a), Pṛśni being a cow. They are, furthermore, characterized as 'self-born' (e.g., 1:168:2a *svajā́s*). As for the Aśvins, they are said to be the twin sons of Vivasvant and Tvaṣṭar's daughter Saraṇyū (10:17:2b–d *kṛtvī́ sávarṇām adadur vívasvate / utā́śvínāv abharad yát tád ā́sīd ájahād u dvā́ mithunā́ saraṇyū́ḥ //*).

3. Might

3.1 *Sarasvatī and the Maruts*

Sarasvatī is also associated with the highly prominent Storm Gods (Maruts),[70] with whom she shares might[71] and a certain wild, fighting spirit (e.g., 1:85):

> *ví yé bhrā́jante súmakhāsa ṛṣṭíbhiḥ*
> *pracyāváyanto ácyutā cid ójasā* / (1:85:4ab)
>
> *śū́rā ivéd yúyudhayo ná jágmayaḥ*
> *śravasyávo ná pṛ́tanāsu yetire* /
> *bháyante víśvā bhúvanā marúdbhyo*
> *rā́jāna iva tveṣásaṃdṛśo náraḥ* // (1:85:8)
>
> They, the good combatants who shine afar with their spears,
> shaking with formidable force the very unshakable things ... (1:85:4ab)
>
> Striding like heroes, like combatants,
> they have assumed battle ranks, like [men] eager for renown.
> All beings are afraid of the Maruts.
> [These] fearsome-looking lords [are] like kings. (1:85:8)[72]

Sarasvatī, however, despite her raging energy, does not seem to take quite as much pleasure in battle as these unstoppable and hence much-feared warriors of the sky. In fact, as if to draw upon their aggressive, combative energy, she is requested to conquer enemies in unison with them (2:30:8b): *marútvatī dhṛṣatī́ jeṣi śátrūn* /. As she broke the back of mountains,[73] they pierce them,[74] shaking the immovable (*dhruvacyút*).[75]

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[70] Thirty-three hymns are dedicated exclusively to them, while in others they are invoked together with Indra (seven hymns), Agni (one hymn), and Pūṣan (one hymn).

[71] E.g., 1:85:10ab *ūrdhváṃ nunudre 'vatáṃ tá ójasā dādṛhāṇáṃ cid bibhidur ví párvatam* / "These [Maruts] have pushed the fountain up with [their] formidable strength; they have cleft the mountain, however firm in its foundation [it may be]." (Renou, EVP vol.10, p.19: "Ces [Marut] ont poussé vers en haut la fontaine, grâce à [leur] force-formidable; ils ont pourfendu la montagne, si ferme-en ses-bases [soit-elle].") 8:20:12a *tá ugrā́so vṛ́ṣaṇa ugrábāhavo* "These formidable bulls with formidable arms ..." (Renou, EVP vol.10, p.50: "Ces formidables taureaux aux bras formidables ...")

[72] Renou, EVP vol.10, p.18: "Eux bons combattants qui brillent au loin avec les lances, ébranlant d'une force-formidable les choses inébranlables elles-mêmes ... Marchant-à-grands-pas tels des héros, tels des combattants, ils ont pris rang pour les batailles, tels (des hommes) avides-de-renom. Tous les êtres ont peur des Maruts. (Ces) seigneurs à l'aspect redoutable (sont) comme des rois."

[73] 6:61:2ab. See p.12 above.

[74] 1:85:10b.

[75] 1:64:11c. Cf. 1:85:4b above.

As she snorts ragingly like a boar,[76] the thundering Storm Gods (... *tanyatúr marútām* ...),[77] like hawks on high competing [for speed], are accompanied by the howling and roaring of the winds (*vā́tasvanasaḥ śyenā́ aspṛdhran* //).[78] Probably in allusion to the sound of the wind, Macdonell points out, the Maruts are called "celestial songs" (*divó arkā́ḥ*).[79]

Associated with lightning, wind, and thunder, one of the main activities of the Maruts is to shed rain.[80] They lift up the rains from out of the ocean and pour them down: *úd īrayathā marutaḥ samudrató yūyáṃ vṛṣṭíṃ varṣayathā purīṣiṇaḥ* / (5:55:5ab).

The Storm Gods are also compared to rivers: *síndhavo ná yayíyo bhrā́jadṛṣṭayaḥ* (10:78:7c).[81] Again, the healing properties of water, even in the form of rain, are called upon for remedies because the Maruts, while showering rain, bestow medicine (*vṛṣṭvī́ śáṃ yór ā́pa usrí bheṣajám*).[82] Like Sarasvatī and the Waters, they are clear and pure: *śúcijanmānaḥ śúcayaḥ pāvakā́ḥ* (7:56:12d).

Sarasvatī and the Storm Gods are invoked together, supplicated to grant possessions and sons.[83] It is said that Sarasvatī has the Maruts for companions (*marútsakhā*).[84]

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[76] 6:61:2ab.

[77] 1:23:11ab.

[78] 7:56:3b.

[79] 5:57:5d. See Macdonell 1897, p.80. Although Macdonell calls them 'the singers of heaven,' *arká* means rather 'hymn' or 'song.' Therefore Geldner (1951, vol.2, p.65) renders *divó arkā́ḥ* as 'des Himmels Chöre' ('the heavenly choirs') and Renou (EVP vol.10, p.34) as 'chants du ciel (personnifiés)' ('heavenly songs [personified]').

[80] E.g., 5:53:10c *ánu prá yanti vṛṣṭáyaḥ* //.

[81] See also 10:78:5c: *ā́po ná nimnaír udábhir jigatnávo* "going quickly like streams of water with downhill waters ..." (Renou, EVP vol.10, p.53: "... allant-avec-vitesse comme les cours-d'eau avec les eaux déclives ...")

[82] 5:53:14c "When it has rained, would that the waters at dawn [be our] welfare [and] happiness, [be our] remedy." (Renou, EVP vol.10, p.30: "Quand il a plu, que les eaux à l'aurore [nous soient à] salut [et] bonheur, [nous soient] un remède!")

[83] 3:54:13a, cd *vidyúdrathā marúta ṛṣṭimánto ... sárasvatī śṛṇavan yajñíyāso dhā́tā rayíṁ sahávīraṃ turāsaḥ* // "The Maruts with chariots [made of] lightning, endowed with spears ... [as well as] Sarasvatī [and other gods], may they hear [our prayer, they who are] worthy of sacrifice! Bestow [on us] wealth befitting of men of status, vigorous [gods]! " (Renou, EVP vol.5, p.13: "Les Marut aux chars [faits] d'éclairs, pourvus de lances ... [ainsi que] Sarasvatī [et autres dieux,] qu'ils entendent [notre prière, eux qui sont] dignes du sacrifice! Conférez [nous] la richesse comportant des hommes d'élites, [dieux] vigoureux!")

[84] 7:96:2c.

4. Sacrifice

4.1 *Sarasvatī, Iḷā, and Bhāratī*

Sarasvatī is also regularly associated with two other female figures, Iḷā and Bhāratī, with whom she forms an oft-invoked triad. They appear in the *āprī-sūkta*, the propitiation hymns composed for ritual purposes centering on Agni, which belong to an early stage of Vedic ritual.[85] The three goddesses, who are said to bring delight (*tisró devī́r mayobhúvaḥ* /)[86] are invited to sit on the sacrificial grass[87] and to protect it.[88]

Iḷā is a milch cow[89] and the mother of a herd.[90] Clarified butter in hand (*ghṛtáhastā*)[91] and her foot dripping with it (*ghṛtápadī*),[92] she is entreated to swell[93] so as to flow abundantly. She may, therefore, represent libation.[94] Renou, in fact, translates *iḷā* as liquid offering ('offrande liquide')[95] and equates it with *páyas*.[96]

Bhāratī is, in some verses, referred to as *hótrā bhā́ratī*, as in 3:62:3d, where she, together with the female guardian deities (*várūtrīḥ*), is asked to favour those invoking: *asmā́n várūtrīḥ śaraṇaír avantv asmā́n hótrā bhā́ratī dákṣiṇābhiḥ* // (3:62:3cd).[97] Bhāratī represents the *hótar* priest

85 Gonda 1975, p.104.
86 1:13:9b = 5:5:8b.
87 E.g., 1:13:9c *barhíḥ sīdantu ...*
88 2:3:8cd *tisró devī́ḥ svadháyā barhír édám ácchidraṃ pāntu śaraṇáṃ niṣádya* // "... would that [these] three goddesses, settling of their own free disposition on this straw bed, watch [over us] with unfailing protection!" (Renou, EVP vol.16, p.43: "... que [ces] trois Déesses, s'installant selon leur libre vocation sur cette litière, veillent [sur nous] d'une protection sans faille!")
89 3:55:13a–c *anyásyā vatsáṁ rihatī́ mimāya káyā bhuvā́ ní dadhe dhenúr ū́dhaḥ* / *ṛtásya sā́ páyasāpinvatéḷā* "Licking the calf of the other one, she has bellowed. Into which world has the milch cow put down her udder? Iḷā swelled with the milk of truth."
90 5:41:19a *abhí na iḷā yūthásya mātā́*.
91 7:16:8a.
92 10:70:8d.
93 10:36:5a *éndro barhíḥ sī́datu pínvatām íḷā* (translated in note 94 below).
94 Böhtlingk-Roth 1855–75, vol.1, p.782; Renou, EVP vol.4, p.114; vol.5, pp.16, 52. According to Geldner, however, Iḷā is the personification of offering in 1:128:7 (1951, vol.1, p.179, note on 1:128:7e), but represents the earth in 3:55:13c (vol.1, p.401, note on 3:55:13). Khan (1978, p.65) most likely follows Böhtlingk-Roth in his interpretation of Iḷā as libation, yet he seems to take *pínvatām* with *barhíḥ* in 10:36:5a, interpreting it erroneously as an invocation to Iḷā to flow "on the sacrificial grass." It is rather: "Let Indra sit on the sacrificial grass; let Iḷā swell."
95 3:55:13c in Renou, EVP vol.5, p.16; 10:36:5a in EVP vol.5, p.52.
96 Renou, EVP vol.4, p.114 (note on 10:36:5a).
97 See also 1:22:10b (*hótrāṃ yaviṣṭha bhā́ratīm* /), 1:142:9b (*hótrā marútsu bhā́ratī* /), and 2:1:11b (*tváṁ hótrā bhā́ratī vardhase girā́* /).

of the Bharatas who were once settled in the area of the river Sarasvatī.[98] In a verse in which Agni is identified with each of the goddesses (2:1:11), he, as *hótrā bhā́ratī*, is said to increase by means of eulogies: *tváṁ hótrā bhā́ratī vardhase girā́* / (2:1:11b). She is clearly, therefore, connected with priestly activity, and with recitation in particular.[99] In *Ṛg Veda Khila* 2:13:2,[100] an apocryphal supplement to the *Ṛg Veda*, Bhāratī is said to be *brahmavādínī*, literally 'one expounding on Vedic texts.'[101] The human *brahmavādin* was a person involved in *brahmódya*, discussion or debate on Vedic thought, or, more generally, a wise person.[102]

Like the sacrificial goddesses Iḷā and Bhāratī, Sarasvatī too appears to be connected with sacrifice as such. In 10:17:7ab, she is called upon while the sacrifice is in progress:

> *sárasvatīṃ devayánto havante*
> *sárasvatīm adhvaré tāyámāne* /
>
> Those who seek after the gods call on Sarasvatī
> while the sacrifice is being performed.

The word *adhvará* (m.), sacrificial ceremony, is etymologically related to *ádhvan* (m.), meaning the way, course, or journey.[103] This *ádhvan* is also the road upon which gods make their way to the sacrificial grounds, and upon which the oblations and successful sacrificers travel to heaven. Thus the *adhvará* is related to this particular way or journey of the sacrifice to the celestial abodes.[104] Therefore, in being called on at this time (*adhvaré tāyámāne*), Gonda suggests, Sarasvatī seems to play a role in the conveyance of oblations to the gods.[105]

98 Gonda 1985, p.20.
99 Bhāratī appears, in one instance (1:22:10 *ā́ gnā́ agna ihā́vase hótrāṃ yaviṣṭha bhā́ratīm* / *várūtrīṃ dhiṣáṇāṃ vaha* // "O Agni, convey here the wives of the gods for favour, Hotrā Bhāratī, Varūtrī, Dhiṣaṇā, O you youngest one."), in the company of *dhiṣáṇā*, which, according to Renou (EVP vol.1, pp.4–5), is sometimes poetic inspiration, sometimes a poem. The meaning and etymology of the word, however, are entirely uncertain. See Mayrhofer 1992, vol.1, pp.791–92.
100 *Die Apokryphen des* Ṛgveda. Ed. Isidor Scheftelowitz, 1906, p.85.
101 Gonda 1985, p.20.
102 On *brahmódya*, see Bodewitz 1976, pp.183–90.
103 Already in 1848, Theodor Benfey (1848, glossary p.35, under *ṛtu*) connected *ádhvan* with *adhvará*. See also Gonda 1975, p.86 and Mayrhofer 1992, vol.1, p.68.
104 Gonda 1975, pp.93ff.
105 Gonda 1985, pp.25–26. Gonda's interpretation, in this connection, of *yajñáṃ dadhe sárasvatī* // (1:3:11c), however, is less convincing: he understands it to mean, in a rather wide sense, that Sarasvatī "has taken, accepted, received, or borne (*dadhe*) the sacrifice" (p.25). *Dadhe*, however, is in the *ātmanepada*, and thus reflects back unto the subject. She may, therefore, 'take,' 'accept,' or 'receive' the sacrifice, but to say that she 'bears'

The explicit connection of all three goddesses (as well as others) with the carrying of sacrifice to the gods appears in a stanza of the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (29:8) of the *Yajur Veda*:

> *ādityáir no bhāratī vaṣṭu yajñáṁ*
> *sárasvatī sahá rudráir na āvīt /*
> *iḍópahūtā vásubhiḥ sajóṣā*
> *yajñáṃ no devīr amṛ́teṣu dhatta //*
>
> May Bhāratī with the Ādityas love our sacrifice;
> Sarasvatī with the Rudras [i.e., Maruts] hath holpen us,
> And Iḍā invoked with Vasus in unison;
> Our Sacrifice, O goddesses, place ye with the immortals.[106]

5. Inspired Thought

As mentioned above,[107] Sarasvatī is invoked to grant, amongst other gifts, *dhī́*, inspired thought (6:49:7b): *sárasvatī vīrápatnī dhíyaṃ dhāt /*. She is closely connected with *dhī́*, which in turn is inextricably linked with *vā́c*, speech, with which Sarasvatī is later identified. It is, in fact, her association with *dhī́* which paves the way for her transformation into Sarasvatī-Vāc, the goddess, not only of speech, but above all of knowledge. It is, therefore, to *dhī́* that we must now turn our attention.

it is to imply action, quite plausibly directed toward another (*parasmaipada*). And if she 'has taken, accepted, received' it, one would assume she has done so for herself: there is no reason to believe she would have received it to pass it on to other gods. This is supported by 1:3:10c *yajñáṃ vaṣṭu dhiyā́vasuḥ* // "let her long for our sacrifice," where surely it is not hoped that she will long for what is intended for others. And parallel to v.10c, appears 11c: *yajñáṃ dadhe sárasvatī* //.

[106] VS 29:8 (≅ MS 3:16:2 [184, 12–13]) = KāṭhS, Aśvamedha section, 6:2 [175, 6–7] = TS 5:1:11:3. (The numbers in square brackets refer to the page and then the line of the edition used. These editions are listed in the bibliography.) Translation by Keith (1914, vol.2, pp.402–03). Cf. VS 28:18c–e: *áspṛkṣad bhā́ratī dívaṁ rudráir yajñáṁ sárasvatī́ḍā vásumatī gṛhā́n* ... Gonda (1985, p.26) points to VS 29:8 as supporting evidence for his interpretation of RV 1:3:11c (*yajñáṃ dadhe sárasvatī*) [see note 105 above] and 10:17:7b (*sárasvatīm adhvaré tāyámāne* /) [see main text, p.25 above] as implying Sarasvatī's function as conveyor of offerings to the gods. In VS 29:8, however, it is not only Sarasvatī who is asked to carry the sacrifice to the gods, but rather all three of the goddesses—together also with other gods—and thus it is not a function exclusive or even particular to Sarasvatī in VS 29:8.

[107] See p.15 above.

5.1 *Meaning*

Böhtlingk and Roth list a series of explanations for *dhī́*, beginning with thought and ending with the personification of intelligence.[108] Geldner translates it as thought ('Gedanke') in 1:3:12 and as wisdom ('Weisheit') in 1:3:10.[109] In 6:61:4c, Renou renders it as poetic vision ('vision poétique'), in 9:100:3a as poetic thought ('pensée-poétique') and in 1:139:2f as 'intuition.'[110] He explains that *dhī́* indicates a kind of intuition linked in particular with *mánas*, and frequently appearing in combination with *mánas* as in *mánasā dhī́*, to see by way of thought ('voir par la pensée').[111] For Gonda it is vision or inspiration, "the exceptional and supranormal faculty, proper to 'seers,' of 'seeing' in the mind."[112] Although *dhī́* generally refers to the inspired thought in its unverbalized state, there are instances where it can be rendered as 'poem, hymn, recitation,'[113] in that the thought is translated into words. In a reciprocal kind of process, the devotee invokes the god, asking for *dhī́*, and upon receiving it, elaborates the inspired thought into a hymn in praise of the god, wherein he asks again for what he desires.[114] Thus *dhī́* functions as a means provided by the gods to reach the gods so as to benefit from them in the widest possible sense.

5.2 *Sarasvatī and Inspired Thought*

Sarasvatī is requested to grant inspired thought (*sárasvatī vīrápatnī dhíyaṃ dhāt*),[115] for she rules over all *dhī́* (*dhíyo víśvā ví rājati* //).[116] Accompanied by inspired thoughts (*sárasvatī sahá dhībhíḥ*),[117] she is

[108] Böhtlingk and Roth 1855–75, vol.3, pp.964–65.

[109] Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.4.

[110] 6:61:4c is translated in Renou, EVP vol.15, p.131; 9:100:3a in EVP vol.9, p.53; and 1:139:2f in EVP vol.5, p.8.

[111] Renou, EVP vol.1, p.3. E.g., 1:163:12b *devadrī́cā mánasā dī́dhyānaḥ* / "... perceiving with the mind turned towards the gods"; 9:100:3ab *tváṃ dhíyaṃ manoyújaṁ sṛjā́ vṛṣṭíṃ ná tanyatúḥ* / "O you, pour forth inspired thought yoked with the mind, as thunder [discharges] rain" [to Pavamāna Soma].

[112] Gonda 1963, p.68.

[113] E.g., 5:52:14d *stutā́ dhībhíḥ* ... See Gonda 1963, p.133; Renou, EVP vol.1, p.3.

[114] Gonda 1963, p.66.

[115] 6:49:7c.

[116] 1:3:12c.

[117] 10:65:13d. See also 7:35:11b.

their promoter (*dhīnā́m avitrī́*).[118] She completes the seers' *dhī́*, making it successful (*sárasvatī sādháyantī dhíyam naḥ*),[119] and should give the singer of the hymn unchallengeable protection (*durādhárṣam gṛṇaté śárma yaṁsat //*).[120] Thus the singer implores (7:35:11b): "Auspicious [for us] be Sarasvatī with inspired thoughts" (*śáṁ sárasvatī sahá dhībhír astu /*).

In a hymn (1:3) to the Aśvins (vv.1–3), Indra (vv.4–6), All Gods (*víśve devāḥ*, vv.7–9), and Sarasvatī (vv.10–12), the poet invokes the goddess as follows:

> *pāvakā́ naḥ sárasvatī vā́jebhir vājínīvatī /*
> *yajñáṃ vaṣṭu dhiyā́vasuḥ //*[121]
>
> *codayitrī́ sūnṛ́tānāṃ cétantī sumatīnā́m /*
> *yajñáṃ dadhe sárasvatī //*
>
> *mahó árṇaḥ sárasvatī prá cetayati ketúnā /*
> *dhíyo víśvā ví rājati //*
>
> Pure Sarasvatī, rich in rewards,
> who [finds] goods through inspired thought, shall long for our sacrifice.
>
> Incitress of energy, expert in good thoughts,
> Sarasvatī has received the sacrifice.
>
> Sarasvatī reveals [herself as] a mighty flood with [that as] her ensign.
> She directs all inspired thoughts.

The bestowal of inspired thought, it should be noted, was not considered a function exclusive to Sarasvatī. Agni (3:11:2c), Indra (1:23:3c), Soma (9:75:2b), Mitra and Varuṇa (7:66:3bc), Savitṛ (3:62:10c), Uṣas (7:79:5c), and others were all in some way connected with *dhī́*, either as granters, stimulators, or lords of it. In Sarasvatī's case, however, additional factors came into play, most notably her connection with the recitation of hymns on her banks within a ritual context, which together with her related association with *dhī́* had a transforming effect on the river goddess. Points of common imagery shared by Sarasvatī, *dhī́*, as well as speech, also contributed to her identification with speech.

[118] 6:61:4c.
[119] 2:3:8a.
[120] 6:49:7d.
[121] Cf. 1:46:2c *dhiyā́ devā́ vasuvídā //* "the two gods who through inspired thought are finders of goods."

5.3 *Common Imagery*

5.3.1 *Cow*

Cow and water imagery were used for both Sarasvatī and *dhī́*. In several instances (e.g., 2:2:9bc; 4:41:5ab; 10:64:12a–c), *dhī́* is compared to a cow:

> 2:2:9a–c
> *evā́ no agne amṛ́teṣu pūrvya*
> ***dhī́ṣ** pīpāya bṛháddiveṣu mā́nuṣā /*
> *dúhānā **dhenúr** vṛjáneṣu kāráve*
>
> Thus, O Agni, O Primordial One, for us amongst the immortals
> in the high heaven, human inspired thought has swelled [with milk],
> as the milch cow giving milk to the poet in [sacrificial] enclosures.
>
> 4:41:5ab
> *índrā yuváṃ varuṇā bhūtám asyā́*
> ***dhiyáḥ** pretā́rā vṛṣabhéva **dhenóḥ** /*
>
> O Indra, O Varuṇa, you two be lovers of this
> inspired thought, as bulls [are] of a milch cow.
>
> 10:64:12
> *yā́ṃ me **dhíyaṃ** máruta índra dévā*
> *ádadāta varuṇa mitra yūyám /*
> *tā́ṃ pīpayata páyaseva **dhenúṃ***
> *kuvíd gíro ádhi ráthe váhātha //*
>
> O Maruts, Indra, gods, Varuṇa, Mitra,
> make the inspired thought which you gave me
> swell as a cow with milk.
> Would you carry [my] songs of praise on [your] chariot?

Inspired thoughts (*dhītáyaḥ*) are said to move afar, like cows along pastures, in search of the far-sighted one [i.e., Varuṇa]: *párā me yanti **dhītáyo gā́vo** ná gávyūtīr ánu / icchántīr urucákṣasam //* (1:25:16). The cow represents not only milk, food, abundance, and liberality, but also poetic art in the form of inspired thoughts. The 'great cow' (*mahī́ gáuḥ*) in 4:41:5d and 10:101:9d is, as the poet indicates (see 4:41:5b quoted above), inspired thought.[122] Renou understands this *mahī́ gáuḥ* and *mahī́* in 10:74:4c as poetic art.[123] The divine cow, having come from (the realms of) the gods, approaches with all inspired thoughts, finds words, and rouses

[122] 4:41:5d = 10:101:9d *sahásradhārā páyasā mahī́ gáuḥ //* "the thousand-streamed great cow with her milk."
[123] Renou, EVP vol.1, p.10.

speech (8:101:16a–c): *vacovídaṃ vā́cam udīráyantīṃ víśvābhir dhībhír upatíṣṭhamānām / devī́ṃ devébhyaḥ páry eyúṣīṃ gā́m.*[124]

Like *dhī́*, Sarasvatī too is associated with the cow. By virtue of being a river, the connection arises in a context wherein rivers in general, flowing along, are compared to cows (e.g., 10:75:4ab):

> *abhí tvā sindho śíśum ín ná mātáro*
> *vāśrā́ arṣanti páyaseva dhenávaḥ /*
>
> [Rivers] flow towards you, O Sindhu, like mothers to their child,
> like bellowing cows with milk.

When Indra slays Vṛtra, he releases the rivers, like fenced-in cows (*gā́ ná vrāṇā́ avánīr amuñcat*).[125] The rivers bring milk with their waters (*páyo hinvānā́ udábhir bharante // *),[126] and in their relationship to Indra are called the 'bull's wives' (*vṛ́ṣṇaḥ pátnīr nadyò vibhvataṣṭā́ḥ / *).[127]

As for Sarasvatī herself, although she is never explicitly called a cow in the *Ṛg Veda*, she would have been perceived as such. RV 7:36:6 refers to the rivers, of which Sarasvatī is the seventh, as *sudúghāḥ*, yielding good milk, as if they were milch cows swelling with their own milk—in this case both the milk of the milch cow and the water of the river:

> *ā́ yát sākáṃ yaśáso vāvaśānā́ḥ*
> *sárasvatī saptáthī síndhumātā /*
> *yā́ḥ suṣváyanta sudúghāḥ sudhārā́*
> *abhí svéna páyasā pī́pyānāḥ //*
>
> When the glorious and longing [rivers come] to [us] in unison—
> Sarasvatī, whose mothers are rivers, [being] the seventh—
> [they] who are fertile, well-yielding, rich-streamed
> are swelling with their own milk towards [us].[128]

Some of the words in this stanza carry a double meaning, referring on the one hand to the water of the rivers and on the other to the milk of the

[124] As far as the sequence of activities is concerned, the word order in 8:101:16ab is clearly reversed in that the earlier is put last: it is certainly not that the cow finds words, rouses speech, and only then approaches with all inspired thoughts. Of what possible use is *dhī́* after the words have already been expressed? And of what poetic value are the words if they have not arisen from inspired thoughts?

[125] 1:61:10c.

[126] 1:104:4d. See also 3:33:1cd.

[127] 5:42:12b.

[128] On *síndhumātar*, see pp.18–21 above. *Suṣváyanta* is a 'non-formation.' It appears to consist of prefix *su-* ('well,' etc.), or reduplication, with root *sū* ('to bear, bring forth'), to which *-aya-* is added. Geldner (1951, vol.2, p.218), referring to the derivation from *sū*, renders it as 'die fruchtbar sind' ('who are fertile') and Renou (EVP vol.5, p.42) as 'qui enfantent' ('who give birth').

milch cow. *Vāvaśānā́ḥ* is a perfect participle either of root *vāś* 'to bellow,' or of root *vaś* 'to wish for, long for.' If the rivers are bellowing, then they are clearly being likened to cows. The noun *páyas* is derived from root *pay/pī* (*páyate*) and literally means 'swelling.' It denotes any kind of fluid, and thus in the context of this stanza can be both water and milk.

There is also a passage where Sarasvatī is asked not to push aside, that is, not to kick the bucket as a cow might during milking (6:61:14ab):

> *sárasvaty abhí no neṣi vásyo*
> *mā́pa spharīḥ páyasā mā́ na ā́ dhak /*
>
> O Sarasvatī, lead us to prosperity.
> May you not push aside. May you not fail us with [your] milk.

Yet another relevant instance is 1:164:49, which although not addressed to Sarasvatī as a cow, but rather to Sarasvatī as a mother, comes to be addressed to a cow in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (38:5) and then again in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (14:2:1:15).[129] In fact, she is specifically called a cow (*dhenú*) in VS 8:43 and 20:55c, 65d.[130]

As for RV 1:164:49, here the poet desires to suck Sarasvatī's breast: *yás te stánaḥ śaśayó yó mayobhū́ḥ ... sárasvati tám ihá dhā́tave kaḥ //.*[131] In a note to this stanza, Geldner[132] says it is dedicated to Sarasvatī, goddess of eloquence, but does not comment further. As Werner Knobl suggests,[133] the mouth is used both in sucking and speaking, and to speak is exactly what the poet does. The image reveals the intimacy of the poet's relationship to Sarasvatī: like an infant bonded to his mother, he is nourished by her precious milk, sucking it directly from her body. Her milk, in this stanza, represents all valuable things, which she gives in full from her abundant breast (*yéna víśvā púṣyasi vā́ryāṇi*)—wealth in the widest sense. For the poet, as a poet, however, there is one treasure above all: inspired thought. Clearly, without precious inspiration he cannot compose and thereby be a poet. Thus if one were to apply this stanza directly to the poet, one might say that he wishes to suck *dhī́* directly from its source so that inspired thoughts might flow from him in the form of

[129] Griffith 1899, p.328 note (in rev. ed. 1987).

[130] Gonda (1985, p.43) lists several other instances wherein Sarasvatī's name is associated with the milch cow (*dhenúḥ sárasvatī*): KāṭhS 38:8 [109, 7]; MS 3:11:2 [142, 1]; 3:11:3 [143, 10; 144, 12]; VS 21:34; TB 2:6:12:1, 4.

[131] 1:164:49ad. This stanza is quoted in full on p.14 above.

[132] Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.236.

[133] Personal communication.

words. And as the riverine waters flow and milk flows, inspired thoughts and their verbalized expression must embody a certain fluidity: if the words do not flow, then surely it is not poetry.

5.3.2 *Water*

Water, the very being of Sarasvatī, is another symbol of inspired thought. The *dhītáyaḥ* assemble like rushes (of water) into wells (10:25:4ab): *sám u prá yanti dhītáyaḥ sárgāso [a]vatā́m̐ iva /*. There is an allusion to the wave which the seer causes to surge from the ocean (*samudrā́d ūrmím úd iyarti venáḥ*),[134] that is, the heart, as indicated in hymn 4:58:5a, 11b:

> *etā́ arṣanti hṛ́dayāt samudrā́t*
>
> These [streams of ghee] flow from the sea, the heart.
>
> *antáḥ samudré hṛdy àntár ...*
>
> ... inside the sea, inside the heart ... [135]

And if the heart is the seat of inspiration,[136] then the wave represents the surge of *dhī́*.

5.4 *Inspired Thought and Speech*

5.4.1 Dhénā

There is also the term *dhénā*, etymologically related to *dhenú*, which occurs with *dhī́* in various passages, such as 10:104:3cd:

> *índra dhénābhir ihá mādayasva*
> *dhībhír víśvābhiḥ śácyā gṛṇānáḥ //*
>
> O Indra, revel here in the nourishing streams (of Soma or speech), being lauded mightily by all the poetic visions.[137]

[134] 10:123:2a. Cf. 4:58:1a *samudrā́d ūrmír mádhumām̐ úd ārat* "From [out of] the ocean, the sweet wave has risen."
[135] Likewise 10:177:1bc *hṛdā́ paśyanti mánasā vipaścítaḥ / samudré antáḥ kaváyo ví cakṣate*.
[136] Renou, EVP vol.1, p.24; Gonda 1963, p.281; Kuiper 1964–65, p.125.
[137] Translation by Hanns-Peter Schmidt in 1975, p.173. For another occurrence of *dhénā* with *dhī́*, see 7:94:4, for instance: *índre agnā́ námo bṛhát suvṛktím érayāmahe / dhiyā́ dhénā avasyávaḥ //* "In Indra, in Agni [is our] high homage: we set in motion the well-turned hymn, the flows [of prayers effected] through poetic vision, we who seek [your] assistance." (Renou, EVP vol.14, p.56: "En Indra, en Agni [est notre] haut hommage: nous mettons en branle l'hymne-bien-tourné, les coulées [de prières réalisées] par la vision-poétique, nous qui cherchons [votre] assistance.")

In the first volume of EVP (p.11), Renou understands *dhénā* as speech in the form of prayer in 4:58:6, and in subsequent volumes considers it to mean a stream of milk (3:1:9)[138] or of prayer (7:94:4).[139] According to Hanns-Peter Schmidt's study of the term, the primary meaning of *dhénā* is 'milk-stream, nourishing stream' and its figurative sense is 'nourishing stream of speech.' The two senses, however, are never dissociated.[140] *Dhénā* is derived from *dhay i* (~*dhā*) 'to suck,' in the way a calf sucks its mother's milk, in the way the poet wishes to suck Sarasvatī's breast (1:164:49). Thus *dhénā* would be that which is sucked. As verbalized inspired thoughts, the flows of speech (*dhénāḥ*), in 4:58:6ab, are said to run together like rivers, or quite possibly streams of ghee,[141] being purified inside by the heart, the mind: *samyák sravanti saríto ná dhénā antár hṛdā́ mánasā pūyámānāḥ /*.[142] The purification of *dhénā* is an image borrowed from Soma, which in ritual is filtered and poured from one vessel to the next. The internal counterpart for this external ritual process takes place in the poet's heart, as he composes hymns.[143]

5.4.2 *From Inspired Thought to Speech*

Inspired thought, *dhī́*, is obviously connected with speech, *vā́c*,[144] for inspired thought not only precedes its utterance, but the utterance itself is nothing but *dhī́* in different, i.e., verbalized, form. *Vā́c* is thus *dhī́*, and yet *dhī́* is not *vā́c*, for inspired thought undergoes some modification while being transformed into speech. The translation of *dhī́* into *vā́c* is likened to weaving (2:28:5c):

> *mā́ tántuś chedi váyato dhíyam me*
>
> Let the thread (warp of the loom) not be cut off
> while I weave my inspired thought [into a poem].

[138] E.g., Renou, EVP vol.12, p.49.
[139] E.g., Renou, EVP vol.14, p.56. Renou's comment (EVP vol.14, p.127), however, that *dhénā* is 'un aspect poétique de *vā́c*' ('a poetic aspect of *vā́c*') is, as Schmidt (1975, p.170) remarks, entirely unclear, as it is too vague.
[140] Schmidt 1975, p.179. Schmidt also provides a summary of other interpretations of *dhénā*.
[141] The previous stanza, RV 4:58:5c, mentions 'streams of ghee' (*ghṛtásya dhā́rāḥ*).
[142] Cf. 9:34:6 *sám enam áhrutā imā́ giro arṣanti sasrútaḥ / dhenū́r vāśró avīvaśat //* "These songs of the same course delivering from evil flow together towards him. The bellowing [god] has made the milch cows bellow." (Renou, EVP vol.8, p.20: "Ces chants délivrant du mal coulent ensemble vers lui, d'un même cours. [Le dieu] mugissant a fait mugir les vaches-laitières.")
[143] Renou, EVP vol.1, pp.25–26.
[144] Renou, EVP vol.1, pp.1ff.; Gonda 1985, pp.49–50. On Vedic Vāc, see especially Renou, EVP vol.1, pp.1–27; Brown 1968; Malamoud 2005.

RV 10:71:2ab states that they who are thoughtful (*dhī́rāḥ*) have produced speech with their mind,[145] purifying it like (barley) grits with a sieve: *sáktum iva títaūnā punánto yátra dhī́rā mánasā vā́cam ákrata /*. The different stages in the transformation of inspired thought (*dhītí*) into speech in the form of *bráhman* are described in the *Atharva Veda* (7:1:1):

dhītī́ vā yé ánayan vācó ágram
mánasā vā yé [á]vadann ṛtā́ni /
tṛtī́yena bráhmaṇā vāvṛdhānā́s
turī́yeṇāmanvata nā́ma dhenóḥ //

They who through inspired thought led to the beginning of speech
or they who in their mind spoke truths,
having grown through the third formulation,
with the fourth [formulation] they understood the name of the milch cow.[146]

The cow, as we have seen, represents inspired thought: she rouses speech, for she is the finder of words (*vacovíd*).[147] Appropriately, she is asked to invigorate the petitioner: "The cow should strengthen him [the poet (*kārú*)] with [her] nourishment, with [her] milk" (7:68:9c *iṣā́ táṃ vardhad aghnyā́ páyobhiḥ*). Speech is also called a milch cow (8:100:11d *dhenúr vā́k*). It might be added that *dhénā* is both a stream of milk from the udder and the flow of speech from the heart.[148]

Similar to *dhī́ra* is *vípra*, an ecstatic seer.[149] *Vípra* comes from the root *vip* 'to tremble, shake, quiver.' Born with the faculty of *dhī́* (8:6:28c *dhiyā́ vípro ajāyata //*),[150] the *vípra* is closely connected with *vā́c* (3:8:5d): *devayā́ vípra úd iyarti vā́cam //*. The *vípra* as an enraptured speaker, therefore, expresses *dhī́* as voiced speech, by raising it.[151]

[145] On the other hand, according to 8:100:11a, *vā́c* was created by the gods: *devī́ṃ vā́cam ajanayanta devā́ḥ*.
[146] AV 7:1:1 is discussed by Thieme (1952, p.106 [repr. 1971, p.115]). The 'name of the milch cow,' as he explains, is a mystic expression for the poetic formulation of a secret truth ("dichterische Formulierung einer geheimen Wahrheit").
[147] 8:101:16a. See pp.29–30 above.
[148] See pp.32–33 above.
[149] A *ṛ́ṣi* can indeed be a *vípra*, as indicated in 4:26:1b *ahám kakṣī́vām̐ ṛ́ṣir asmi vípraḥ /*.
[150] In 8:6:28c the *vípra* is Indra or Soma. See Geldner's note in 1951, vol.2, p.297.
[151] On *vip* and *vípra*, see Renou, EVP vol.1, p.5; Gonda 1963, pp.36–39.

5.5 *Sarasvatī and Speech*

Thus, since *dhī́* and *vā́c* walk hand in hand so to speak, Sarasvatī, who is repeatedly associated with *dhī́* in the *Ṛg Veda*, is, in turn, by way of *dhī́*, implicitly connected with *vā́c*. As she grants inspired thought, she makes its manifestation in the form of poetry or prayer, and thus speech, possible. *Dhī́*, therefore, over which she presides (1:3:12c),[152] is fundamental to the gradual rapprochement and eventual identification of Sarasvatī with speech. In fact, already in the *Ṛg Veda*, the river goddess and speech share common imagery and metaphorical language, which thus also bring them together. The fluidity of Sarasvatī's riverine waters is akin to, and might be interpreted as embodied in, the fluency of speech arising from inspired thought. The association of Sarasvatī and speech, never expressed in the *Ṛg Veda*, was nonetheless present at the level of ritual performed on the banks of the Sarasvatī, for the recitation of inspired hymns accompanied offerings into the sacred fire. The connection of the river goddess with the chanting and hence also with the composition of hymns would inevitably have contributed to her link with inspired thought, and in the long run with speech. It is, furthermore, not without significance and subsequent impact that her associate Bhāratī, known as *hótrā bhā́ratī*, is connected with speech in the form of recitation.[153] Just as Sarasvatī will come to be identified with Vāc, she and Bhāratī, by the time of the Purāṇas, will be one and the same. And thus we find in the *Bṛhaddevatā* (5:101) of the late Puranic period[154] that Vāc is called Bhāratī, the language of the Bharatas.

Another point of connection between Sarasvatī and *vā́c* is sound, common to both the river flow and speech. *Vā́c*, furthermore, can be translated as voice.[155] The sound of Sarasvatī's waters, as we have seen, is powerfully described: they bellow (7:36:6a) like a cow, roar (6:61:8c) like a bull, and snort ragingly like a boar (6:61:2ab). With the river's rag-

[152] See p.27 above.
[153] See pp.24–25 above.
[154] The *Bṛhaddevatā*, an exegetic text intended to explain the deities of the *Ṛg Veda* and the episodes related to them, dates back, according to Macdonell (1904 [repr. 1965], pt.1, p.xxiii) to ca. 400 B.C.E. Muneo Tokunaga's extensive study of the text (1997), however, shows that the date of the legends contained therein may not go beyond the middle of the first millennium C.E. Furthermore, the text was completely revised and expanded between the seventh century and 1187 C.E. (Tokunaga 1997, pp.xxiii–xlv).
[155] See, for instance, RV 3:8:5d quoted on p.34 above in connection with the *vípra*. The phrase *iyarti vā́cam* can be translated either as "starts speech" or as "raises (his) voice."

ing as the background to the rhythmic recitation of inspired hymns on Sarasvatī's banks, the association with speech on the one hand and music on the other can hardly be overlooked.[156]

Despite the connecting links between *vā́c* and Sarasvatī, the goddess Vāc clearly extends far above and beyond Sarasvatī in the *Ṛg Veda*. In a beautiful hymn (10:125) spoken by Vāc, it is Speech, in the first person, who reveals herself. Her womb is in the Waters within the ocean, from which she spreads to the sky (10:125:7b–d).[157] All-pervading (10:125:6d),[158] she dwells in many places (10:125:3d).[159] She gave birth to the creator (10:125:7a),[160] and is the power behind all actions (10:125:4–6): it is she who strings Rudra's bow (10:125:6a),[161] and through her do beings see, hear, eat, and breathe (10:125:4ab).[162] She blows like the wind, embracing all creatures (10:125:8ab),[163] who depend on her (10:125:4c),[164] while she herself is beyond the earth and the sky (10:125:8c).[165]

Her aquatic womb, even if only symbolic, links her with Sarasvatī, as does her all-pervasiveness, for the river goddess too fills more realms than one, the earth and the wide space in between (6:61:11ab).[166] Vāc, however, extends beyond these spheres, beyond even the creator himself. She sets creation in motion by giving birth to the father and thus becoming a creator herself, like the Waters, producers of all that is fixed and moves (6:50:7d).[167] Likened to the wind and enabling beings to breathe, Vāc is also closely connected with breath, with the element air, as speech is dependent on it. As an unseen, all-pervading power, producing, sustaining, and extending beyond creation, she is said to be the prototype of the *ātman-brahman* of the Upaniṣads.[168] In the *Aitareya*

156 Sarasvatī's connection with music is discussed on pp.130–31 below.
157 *máma yónir apsv àntáḥ samudré / táto ví tiṣṭhe bhúvanā́nu viśv[ā u]tā́mū́ṃ dyā́ṃ varṣmáṇópa spṛśāmi //.*
158 *ahā́ṃ dyā́vā pṛthivī́ ā́ viveśa //* "I have entered the heaven and the earth."
159 *bhū́riṣṭhātrām bhū́ry āveśáyantīm //.*
160 *ahám̐ suve pitáram asya mūrdhán.*
161 *ahám̐ rudrā́ya dhánur ā́ tanomi.*
162 *máyā só ánnam atti yó vipáśyati yáḥ prā́ṇiti yá īm̐ śṛṇóty uktám /.*
163 *ahám evá vā́ta iva prá vāmy ārábhamāṇā bhúvanāni víśvā /* "It is I who blow forth like the wind, taking hold of all beings."
164 *amantávo mā́ṃ tá úpa kṣiyanti.*
165 *paró divā́ pará enā́ pṛthivyā́.*
166 See p.13 above.
167 See p.18 above.
168 Renou, EVP vol.1, p.1. Geldner (1951, vol.3, p.355) says this hymn represents one of the early stages of the *prāṇa-brahman-ātman* doctrine. In later conception, however, Vāc is nearest to Om, the sounded expression of *bráhman*. It is not without interest

Brāhmaṇa (4:21:1), the two are identical: *brahma vai vāk*. Since *bráhman* in the *Ṛg Veda* very often stands for hymns or stanzas accompanying the ritual,[169] the two were closely related at the level of speech even then (RV 10:114:8d):

yā́vad bráhma víṣṭhitaṃ tā́vatī vā́k //

As far as *bráhman* is extended, so far is *vā́c*.[170]

In this sense Vāc reaches beyond Sarasvatī, who is very much within creation, flowing through it rather than transcending it. Sarasvatī's very being lies in her creative, life-giving waters, which embody her inexhaustible plenitude and strength. As a powerful mother, she gives, she nourishes, she protects. Sarasvatī is the river of inspired thought, the great flood of *dhī́*. And as inspired thought is transmuted into speech, she roars with joy, dancing from the mountains to join the ocean.

6. From River to Speech
Studies on the Transformation of Sarasvatī

The transformation of Sarasvatī into Sarasvatī-Vāc has been the subject of very little discussion. Macdonell, for instance, suggested Sarasvatī's healing of Indra through speech in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (19:12)[171] as the starting point.[172] But why should she have suddenly resorted to speech if she had had no direct connection with Vāc in the *Ṛg Veda*? Oldenberg looked further back and perceptively noted Sarasvatī's function as inspirer of hymns in the *Ṛg Veda* (6:61:4c).[173] Others, such as Keith and Hillebrandt, suggested geography: it was especially here, on the banks of the Sarasvatī, that Vedic culture flourished and sacred hymns were recited.[174] Amongst more recent studies, Airi in his book on Sarasvatī in

that just as Vāc is divided into four quarters in the *Ṛg Veda* (1:164:45), so is Om (as AUM) in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (9–12). (My intention here is simply to point to the common fourfold division, for it is impossible to identify parallels between the respective quarters, as in the case of Vāc they are largely undefined.)
169 Renou, EVP vol.1, p.1; Gonda 1950, p.14.
170 Cf. AV 7:1:1 quoted on p.34 above.
171 See p.46 below.
172 Macdonell 1897, p.87.
173 Oldenberg 1923, p.248, note 1. Although Oldenberg (p.248) does not give a reference for 'Förderin der Gebete' ('promotress of prayer'), 6:61:4c (*dhīnā́m avitrī́ avatu //*) is the passage of which he speaks.
174 Keith 1925, vol.1, p.173; Hillebrandt 1981, p.399, note 114.

Vedic literature (1977) surprisingly does not discuss why her identification with speech might have occurred. Khan in his volume on Sarasvatī in Sanskrit literature (1978) states that "The sacred waters of the river Sarasvatī, infused life into the people residing along its banks and this fresh life was the cause of the holy speech in the form of sacred hymns, which led them to identify the river with speech or conceive it as goddess of speech."[175] Kanailal Bhattacharyya in his monograph on Sarasvatī (1983) thinks "the principal idea underlying the concept of these two deities—Vāc and Sarasvatī—is that of good fortune which brings in blissful prosperity and abundance."[176] He adds that the identification is made possible by shared characteristics and association with a number of the same deities, such as the Maruts and the Aśvins.[177]

There is only one study which actually discusses the factors that contributed to the identification of the river goddess with speech: Gonda's *Pūṣan and Sarasvatī* published in 1985, the first five chapters of which deal with the Vedic Sarasvatī. Here Gonda collects the relevant Vedic passages and concludes that Sarasvatī-Vāc owes her existence to four fundamental factors, to each of which he dedicates roughly one chapter: Sarasvatī's association with the ritual goddesses Iḍā/Iḷā and Bhāratī (chapter 2); Sarasvatī's identification with the cow, who was associated with Vāc (chapters 3–4); the relationship of the cow and Sarasvatī with *dhī́* (chapter 4); and the primeval Waters as the source of Vāc (chapter 5).[178]

As the first serious study on the subject, Gonda's work is certainly useful. There are a few respects, however, in which I think it might be improved, and this I have attempted to do in my own, immediately preceding study of the *Ṛg Veda* and in the following chapters. The numerous textual references presented by Gonda are not placed in a historically sequential order, which consequently does not provide for a clear picture of the gradual conceptual development of the Vedic Sarasvatī. The order in which he discusses the factors that contributed to the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāc, furthermore, are not organized so as to follow the trajectory from river to speech. Gonda's first chapter is about the river goddess, but he relegates a discussion of the Waters, to whom she as a river is particularly close, to the final chapter on Sarasvatī. As he himself points out, she "owes her most important functions and quali-

[175] Khan 1978, p.108.
[176] K. Bhattacharyya 1983, p.26.
[177] Ibid., pp.27, 31.
[178] Gonda 1985, p.66.

ties to her being one of the waters ..."[179] Speech—the end of the trajectory—on the other hand, is taken up in the middle (third) chapter.

I would suggest, moreover, that certain points in Gonda are given too much emphasis, while insufficient weight is lent to others. The recitation of hymns on Sarasvatī's banks, which in my opinion, as I have discussed above, is an important factor contributing to the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāc, is not included amidst Gonda's leading factors. Furthermore, Gonda's study of *dhī́* is subsumed under his chapter heading of the cow (chapter 4): as I have tried to show in my discussion above, Sarasvatī's connection with *dhī́*, related to the recitation of hymns on her banks, was, in my view, absolutely fundamental in the process of her transformation. The cow imagery, on the other hand, appears to lend secondary support to the Sarasvatī-*dhī́*, and also Vāc, association. As for Gonda's fourth and final factor regarding the Waters as the source of Vāc, it seems to me rather unconvincing as a fundamental argument, for the Waters, as we have seen, are the producers of all that is fixed and moves (6:50:7d), and hence not just of Vāc. There is only one occurrence in the *Ṛg Veda* (10:125:7b) in which the Waters are identified as the source of Vāc. Besides this one instance, there is nothing, as far as I am aware, to indicate that the Waters and Vāc should have any particular relationship.

[179] Ibid., p.55.

CHAPTER TWO

ATHARVA VEDA

1. Worldly Matters

In the *Atharva Veda*, Sarasvatī appears as a healer and a life-giver, signs of which were already evident in the *Ṛg Veda*, some of whose stanzas are repeated here: not only does water as such carry within it life-giving and healing properties,[1] but Sarasvatī was and is specifically invoked to grant progeny (RV 2:41:17d ≅ AV 7:68:1d)[2] and to place the embryo in a woman's womb (RV 10:184:2b = AV 5:25:3b).[3] In the *Atharva Veda* she is called upon, together with Agni, Savitṛ, and Brahmaṇaspati, in a prayer for the recovery of virility.[4] Furthermore, she is sought after to remedy defects in body, speech, and action,[5] to destroy poison,[6] and, together with Heaven, Earth, Indra, and Agni, to cure worms.[7] Already in the *Ṛg Veda* and again here she is said to have cured Indra (RV 10:131:5d = AV 20:125:5d).[8] Thus Sarasvatī gives and sustains life: where various forms of *prāṇa* are worshipped, so is she.[9] Moreover, her assis-

[1] See p.17 above.

[2] AV 7:68:1d *prajā́ṃ devi rarāsva naḥ //*. For RV 2:41:17d, see p.14, note 24 above.

[3] *gárbhaṃ dhehi sarasvatī.*

[4] 4:4:6d *dhánur ivā́ tānayā pásaḥ.*

[5] 7:57:1 *yád āśáyā vádato me vicukṣubhé yád yā́camānasya cárato jánām ánu / yád ātmáni tanvò me víriṣṭaṁ sárasvatī tád ā́ pṛṇad ghṛténa //* "What has gone wrong (*vi-kṣubh*) on the part of me speaking with expectation, what of [me] going about among people begging, what in myself of my body is torn apart—that may Sarasvatī fill up with ghee." (Translation by William Dwight Whitney in 1905, vol.1, p.427.)

[6] 6:100:1cd *tisráḥ sárasvatīr aduḥ sácittā viṣadū́ṣaṇam //* "... the three Sarasvatīs have given, accordant, the poison-spoiler." (Whitney 1905, vol.1, p.354.) The three Sarasvatī are discussed on p.43 below.

[7] 5:23:1cd *óte me dyā́vāpṛthivī́ ótā devī́ sárasvatī / ótau ma índraś cāgníś ca kṛ́mim jambhayatām íti //* "Worked in (*óta*) for me [are] heaven-and-earth; worked in [is] divine Sarasvatī; worked in for me [are] both Indra and Agni: to the effect 'let them (dual) grind up the worm.' " (Whitney 1905, vol.1, p.262.)

[8] *sárasvatī tvā maghavan abhiṣṇak //*. This incident is elaborated in great detail in the *Yajur Veda* and other texts. See pp.44–52 below.

[9] 6:41:2 *apānā́ya vyānā́ya prāṇā́ya bhū́ridhāyase / sárasvatyā uruvyáce vidhéma haviṣā vayám //* "To expiration, to perspiration (*vyāná*), to breath the much nourishing, to Sarasvatī the wide extending, would we pay worship with oblation." (Whitney 1905, vol.1, p.311.) Rather, *apāna* is inhalation, and *prāṇa* is exhalation. See Bodewitz 1986.

tance—together with Mitra, Varuṇa, and the middle and two ends of the Earth—is sought in matters of love.[10] Sarasvatī is also invoked in marriage ceremonies,[11] where the bride is asked to pay homage to her.[12] Connected primarily with matters of this world, she is asked to protect the invoker from the 'earthly' (16:4:4):

> *sū́ryo mā́hnaḥ pātv agníḥ pṛthivyā́*
> *vāyúr antárikṣād yamó manuṣyèbhyaḥ*
> *sárasvatī pā́rthivebhyaḥ //*
>
> Let Sūrya protect me from the day, Agni from the earth,
> Vāyu from the space in between, Yama from men,
> Sarasvatī from the earthly.[13]

Sarasvatī's association with matters of this world in the *Atharva Veda* reflects the characteristic orientation of the text itself. Furthermore, as she is on several occasions invoked together with other gods, as in the request for assistance in matters of love (6:89:3), in the prayer for the recovery of virility (4:4:6d), and in the curing worms (5:23:1cd), these functions cannot be construed as specifically her own. Her healing faculties (i.e., the healing of Indra in 20:125:5d) and granting of progeny

[10] 6:89:3b *máhyaṃ tvā mitrā́váruṇau máhyaṃ devī́ sárasvatī / máhyaṃ tvā mádhyaṃ bhū́myā ubhā́v ántau sám asyatām //* "Unto me let Mitra-and-Varuṇa, unto me divine Sarasvatī, unto me let the middle of the earth, let both [its] ends fling (*sam-as*) thee." (Whitney 1905, vol.1, p.347.)

[11] 14:2:15ab *práti tiṣṭha virā́ḍ asi víṣṇur ivehá sarasvati /* "Stand firm, *virāj* art thou; as it were, Viṣṇu here, O Sarasvatī ..." (Whitney 1905, vol.2, p.756.)

[12] 14:2:20cd *ádhā sárasvatyai nāri pitṛ́bhyaś ca námas kuru //* "... then, O woman, do thou pay homage to Sarasvatī and to the Fathers." (Whitney 1905, vol.2, p.757.)

[13] It is not clear what the 'earthly' (*pā́rthiva*) refers to. In the *Atharva Veda*, *pā́rthiva* occurs twenty-five times. Eight of the occurrences are repetitions of the *Ṛg Veda*: AV 7:26:1 (7:27:1); 7:51:1 (7:49:1); 8:4:23; 14:1:5; 18:1:46; 19:11:2, 4; 20:121:2b. The rest are independent, although two are identical: 2:28:3; 2:29:1; 4:1:4; 4:25:2; 9:5:14; 10:9:6; 11:7:21; 11:6:8a (11:8:8a); 14:1:3; 16:4:4; 19:9:7; 19:47:1; 20:17:12b = 20:87:7b; 20:36:8b, 9b; 20:70:6b. These occurrences of *pā́rthiva* are often in contrast with *divyá* (e.g., 9:6:14), and have to do with plants (2:29:1), animals (e.g., 2:28:3), beings—human (e.g., 14:1:3, 5) or otherwise (e.g., 20:70:6)—spaces (e.g., 7:27:1 *rájas*) or worlds (e.g., 9:5:14), treasures (e.g., 20:87:7), and *utpā́ta* (19:9:7). (Whitney translates *utpā́ta* as 'portents.' The meaning, however, is not entirely clear.) Nevertheless, the greatest number of references are to earthly spaces (five times: 4:1:4; 7:27:1; 18:1:46; 19:47:1; 20:70:6), to which may be added *loká* (9:5:14; 10:9:6) and *jágat* (20:36:9). Although the superior number of occurrences of *pā́rthiva* within a spatial/geographical context is clearly insufficient grounds for interpreting the passage connected with Sarasvatī in the same light, it does show a preferential use of the term, which, not insignificantly, happens to be directly in line with the *pā́rthivāni* (earthly [spaces]) of RV 6:61:11a, which Sarasvatī fills (*āpaprúṣī pā́rthivāni ...*) (see p.13 above). That being said, one may wonder how the earthly spaces differ from the earth, from which Agni protects.

(5:25:3b; 7:68:1d), moreover, are by no means new roles attributed to her in the *Atharva Veda*, but are found, rather, in passages lifted directly from the *Ṛg Veda*. Hence, although her involvement in matters of this world in the context of the *Atharva Veda* cannot be denied, it is partly derived from the *Ṛg Veda*, shared with other gods, and clearly related to the *Atharva Veda*'s this-worldly orientation.

2. Sarasvatī and Speech

Of greater significance in the *Atharva Veda*, on the other hand, is Sarasvatī's identification with speech (5:7:5ab): ... *vā́cā sárasvatyā* ... It is by way of Sarasvatī that worshippers call on *vā́c* (5:10:8):

> *sárasvatyā vā́cam úpa hvayāmahe manoyújā* //
>
> By Sarasvatī, mind-yoked, we call unto speech.[14]

In RV 8:13:26d (*dhíyaṃ manoyújam* //) and 9:100:3a (*tváṃ dhíyaṃ manoyújam*), *dhī́*, with which Sarasvatī is so closely associated,[15] is yoked with the mind. *Sárasvatyā manoyújā* in the above *Atharva Veda* passage (5:10:8) recalls this connection, while the invocation of speech by way of Sarasvatī clearly asserts, at the very least, her closeness with *vā́c*. As we have seen,[16] speech and inspired thought are inextricably related, as *vā́c* expresses *dhī́* at the verbal level. The act of speaking, however, by the thoughtful (the *dhī́rāḥ*) is by way of *mánas*: *yátra dhī́rā mánasā vā́cam ákrata* (RV 10:71:2b). In the *Atharva Veda*, then, they call on speech by means of Sarasvatī, who is associated with *dhī́*, and yoked with the mind, the channel, so to speak, connecting inspired thought with speech. Both in reflecting back to the *Ṛg Veda*, if not paralleling some of its passages, and in explicitly showing the closeness of Sarasvatī and speech, who are already identified in AV 5:7:5ab, the passage AV 5:10:8 functions as a bridge in the conceptual development of Sarasvatī. Whereas in the *Ṛg Veda* the goddess was implicitly associated with speech by way of *dhī́*, AV 5:10:8 provides almost a mirror image of the *Ṛg Veda*, in that what was implicit is made explicit (*vā́c*-connection), while what was explicit is referred to implicitly (*dhī́*-connection).

[14] Whitney 1905, vol.1, p.236.
[15] See pp.27–28 above.
[16] See pp.33–34 above.

3. The Three Sarasvatī

Another point of interest in the *Atharva Veda* is the mention of the three Sarasvatī (*tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ*) in 6:100:1c. The three are undoubtedly the three goddesses Sarasvatī, Iḷā, and Bhāratī, who are often—in all of the Āprī hymns of the *Ṛg Veda*—referred to as *tisró devī́ḥ* (RV 1:13:9; 1:142:9; 1:188:8; 2:3:8; 3:4:8; 5:5:8; 7:2:8; 9:5:8; 10:70:8; 10:110:8; AV 5:12:8). Although Sāyaṇa interprets the *tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ* either as Sarasvatī in the form of the *trayī́ vidyā́* (i.e., the *Ṛg*, the *Sāma*, and the *Yajur Veda*) or as the three goddesses, only the second option is possible because the first represents a later interpretation, not only of Sarasvatī as goddess of knowledge and mother of the Vedas, but also of the *trayī́ vidyā́* as such.[17]

The reference to the goddesses as *tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ*, however, is not to be interpreted as an identification of the three, where Iḷā and Bhāratī merge to become two other forms of the one Sarasvatī. Rather, just as the *saptá hótāraḥ* (e.g., RV 8:60:16a; cf. AV 4:24:3c), for instance,[18] it is an elliptical plural designating three separate figures. Although Sarasvatī later comes to be identified with Bhāratī, here the plural indicates the association of the three goddesses with one another and Sarasvatī's predominance amongst them.

[17] Sāyaṇa: *tisraḥ trisaṅkhyākāḥ sarasvatīḥ sarasvatyas trayīrūpāḥ* [*trayī-vidyā-rūpāḥ*] / *yad vā iḍā sarasvatī bhāratīti tisro devyaḥ sāhacaryāt sarasvatya ucyante* /. For the understanding of *trayī* in the sense of *trayī vidyā*, see Böhtlingk and Roth 1855–75, vol.3, p.415, under *trayī*.
[18] The *saptá hótāraḥ* are the *hótar*, the *adhvaryú*, the *praśastár*, the *pótar*, the *puróhita*, the *agnídh*, and the *néṣṭar* (Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.430, note on RV 4:9:3–5), who officiate at the sacrifice.

CHAPTER THREE

YAJUR VEDA

In the liturgical *Yajur Veda*, Sarasvatī finds herself in a highly ritualistic environment. Her waters are barely mentioned (VS 20:86; 34:11),[1] and yet their healing and life-giving properties are embodied in the physician Sarasvatī, and their sound, in her identity with Vāc.

1. Sautrāmaṇī Ritual

The Sautrāmaṇī ritual appears in both the Black and the White *Yajur Veda*, and is intended to ward off various forms of evil in the sacrificer's personal life and to assure success, victory, and so on.[2] It revolves around the mythical cure of *sutrāman-* ('whose protection is good') Indra, from whose epithet it derives its name. Suffering from excessive indulgence in Soma, Indra is cured by Sarasvatī and the Aśvins.

1.1 Ṛg Veda *Background*

The incident is already mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda* (10:131:5):

> *putrám iva pitárāv aśvínobh[ā*
> *í]ndrāváthuḥ kā́vyair daṁsánābhiḥ /*
> *yát surā́maṃ vyápibaḥ śácībhiḥ*
> *sárasvatī tvā maghavann abhiṣṇak //*
>
> As parents [favour their] son, so both Aśvins [have favoured Indra].
> O Indra! [O Aśvins!] You two have favoured [Indra] with a seer's insights and wondrous powers.
> O mighty one! When with your abilities you drank [the Soma] from the *surā́ma* (mixture of the spirituous liquor *súrā* and Soma),
> [then] Sarasvatī healed you.[3]

[1] VS 20:86 = RV 1:3:12.

[2] See Gonda 1980, pp.65–66.

[3] RV 10:131:5 = VS 10:34 = MS 3:11:4 [146, 3–4] = KāṭhS 17:19 [263, 13–14] = KāṭhS 38:9 [111, 7–8]. Translation by Werner Knobl (personal communication). As Geldner

Although this stanza indicates that Indra drank to separate [the Soma from] the *surā́ma* mixture, the immediately previous one (RV 10:131:4) says the Aśvins did:

> *yuváṁ surā́mam aśvinā námucāv āsuré sácā /*
> *vipipānā́ śubhas patī índraṃ kármasv āvatam //*
>
> Drinking to separate the *surā́ma* at the place of Namuci the demon,
> you Aśvins, lords of beauty, have helped Indra in his deeds.

So the act in the service of Indra attributed to the Aśvins in 10:131:4 is apparently repeated in 10:131:5, but this time by Indra himself. At any rate, the skill-requiring task of drinking so as to separate the Soma from the *súrā*[4] implies the performance of a deliberate, controlled task, rather than a perhaps unintentional, certainly undisciplined, excessive indulgence in Soma, as represented in the later accounts surrounding the Sautrāmaṇī ritual.

1.2 *Myth and Ritual*

The elaborated story is found in the *Yajur Veda*, most notably in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (19–21), and the rite itself is then described in the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta Sūtras. It takes four days to perform (*catūrātrá*), but the main sacrifice is on the final day, when offerings of milk, the spirituous liquor *súrā*, various animals,[5] and thirty-three libations of fat gravy obtained from cooking the immolated creatures are presented to Indra, Sarasvatī, and the Aśvins. The mythical story is re-enacted,[6] as the sacrificer takes the part of Indra and the officiants as-

notes (1951, vol.3, p.364, note on 10:131:5ab), the construction is oddly confused in that Indra should appear in the accusative (*índram*) instead of the vocative. As for *surā́ma*, Geldner explains (1951, vol.3, p.363, note on 10:131:4a) that it can be *surā-ama*, either a genitive *tatpuruṣa* meaning 'vigour of *súrā*' or a *bahuvrīhi* to the implied Soma that has the strength of *súrā*, or *súrā-* with secondary suffix *-ma*. When Indra drank to separate (*vi-ápibat*) the *surā́ma*, he may have drunk the Soma from out of a mixture. According to Geldner (1951, vol.3, p.364), *surā́ma* is 'geschnapster (Soma)' and thus is a mix of *súrā* and Soma. VS 20:59 and TB 2:6:12:2 recount how Namuci gave Indra Soma mixed with *súrā* (and with the blood of Namuci according to Mahīdhara). Thereby Namuci gained power over Indra, and Soma became impure. To restore Soma, the Aśvins and Sarasvatī provided assistance. See Bloomfield 1890–93, pp.143–63.

[4] Not unlike the ability to separate either Soma (VS 19:74) or in later texts milk from water attributed to the *haṃsa*. On the *haṃsa* see pp.133–35 below.

[5] A he-goat is offered to the Aśvins, a ram to Sarasvatī, and a bull to Indra.

[6] According to ŚB 12:7:3:6, Indra, Sarasvatī, and the Aśvins were the first performers of the Sautrāmaṇī.

sume the roles of the twins and Sarasvatī, consuming, during the ritual, part of the oblations.[7]

Accompanied by the Aśvins as physicians, the physician Sarasvatī bestows on Indra his characteristic qualities (*indriyā́ṇi*) by means of *vā́c*.[8] She weaves his inner form,[9] making, through *mánas*, a beautiful body for him.[10] She and the Aśvins are in his mouth,[11] and she produces his *vyāná* breath and nose hairs.[12] As consort of the Aśvins, she bears the well-formed embryo within her womb: *sárasvatī yónyāṃ gárbham antár aśvíbhyāṃ pátnī súkṛtaṃ bibharti* /.[13] *Aśvíbhyām* can be understood either as instrumental, or as dative, or as ablative. Taken as instrumental, it can be construed with *súkṛtam* as "well made by the Aśvins." Taken as dative, it can be construed with *bibharti* as "she bears for the Aśvins." And taken as ablative, it can be construed with *gárbham* as "the embryo from the Aśvins."

Sarasvatī gives Indra his faculties (*indriyā́ṇi*)[14] and, through *prāṇá*, his manly energy (*vīryàm*).[15]

1.3 *Sarasvatī and the Aśvins*

The association of Sarasvatī and the Aśvins occurs, in the *Ṛg Veda*, in the above mentioned verse (10:131:5) referring to their cooperative healing of Indra, as well as in an incantation for safe pregnancy and delivery (10:184), where various gods, including the Aśvins and Sarasvatī (10:184:2), are asked to place the embryo in a woman's womb:

> *gárbhaṃ dhehi sinīvāli gárbhaṃ dhehi sarasvati* /
> *gárbhaṃ te aśvínau devā́v ā́ dhattāṃ púṣkarasrajā* //

[7] Gonda 1980, pp.65, 91.

[8] VS 19:12 *devā́ yajñám atanvata bheṣajáṃ bhiṣájāśvínā / vācā́ sárasvatī bhiṣág índrāyendriyā́ṇi dádhataḥ* //.

[9] VS 19:82b = MS 3:11:9 [153, 5] = KāṭhS 38:3 [103, 8] ≅ TB 2:6:4:1b *sárasvatī vayati péśo ántaram* /.

[10] VS 19:83ab = MS 3:11:9 [153, 7] = KāṭhS 38:3 [103, 10] = TB 2:6:4:2 *sárasvatī mánasā peśaláṃ vásu nā́satyābhyāṃ vayati darśatáṃ vápuḥ* /.

[11] VS 19:88ab = MS 3:11:9 [154, 2] = KāṭhS 38:3 [103, 20] ≅ TB 2:6:4:4ab *múkhaṁ sád asya śíra ít sátena jihvā́ pavítram aśvínāsánt sárasvatī* /.

[12] VS 19:90cd = MS 3:11:9 [154, 7] = KāṭhS 38:3 [104, 4] *sárasvaty upavā́kair vyānáṃ násyāni bahír bádarair jajāna* /.

[13] VS 19:94ab = MS 3:11:9 [155, 1] = KāṭhS 38:3 [104, 11] = TB 2:6:4:6ab.

[14] VS 20:58ab = MS 3:11:3 [143, 15] = KāṭhS 38:8 [109, 12] = TB 2:6:12:2ab *ājúhvānā sárasvatī́ndrāyendriyā́ṇi vīryàm* /.

[15] VS 20:80b *prāṇéna sárasvatī vīryàm* /. Cf. VS 20:58.

> Place the embryo, O Sinīvālī; place the embryo, O Sarasvatī;
> Let the heavenly Aśvins, lotus-garlanded, place the embryo
> [into] your [womb].

While Sarasvatī in the *Ṛg Veda* is implicitly connected with healing by way of water, for all remedies dwell in the Waters, the Aśvins have behind them a long, successful, and minutely recorded career as physicians and succourers. The inseparable twins are divine physicians, famed in the *Ṛg Veda* for their rescuing power, described in numerous legends. They restore sight to the blind, cure the emaciated, and mend those of whom something is broken.[16] They also release the aged from decrepitudc by restoring their youth.[17]

1.4 *Sarasvatī and Indra*

1.4.1 Vṛtraghnī́

Like Indra, Sarasvatī is called a Vṛtra-slayer in the *Ṛg Veda* (6:61:7c *vṛtraghnī́*). Although *vṛtrá* may refer to enemies, as explained in Émile Benveniste and Louis Renou's study of *vṛtrá* and *vṛΘragna* (*sic*),[18] the overwhelming personality of Indra causes the term *vṛtrahán* to call to mind the god's exploits or to solicit his invocation even while being applied to another divinity. In the *Ṛg Veda*, however, it is not simply a name of Indra, as is the case in subsequent texts. Traces of its independent use, according to Renou,[19] can be found in its application to Soma (e.g., RV 1:91:5b) and to the Aśvins (RV 8:8:9, 22),[20] for instance.

In accord with the nature of her waters, Sarasvatī readily takes on a fierce, combative character.[21] In the context of the stanza in which she is

[16] RV 10:39:3cd *andhásya cin nāsatyā kṛśásya cid yuvā́m id āhur bhiṣájā rutásya cit* //.

[17] RV 1:117:13ab *yuváṃ cyávānam aśvinā járantaṃ púnar yúvānaṃ cakrathuḥ śácībhiḥ* /.

[18] Benveniste and Renou 1934, pp.93, 115ff.

[19] Ibid., pp.115–16, 117. The Iranian tradition strongly suggests that Vṛtrahan was originally an independent figure unconnected with Indra. In India, the warrior-like Vṛtrahan would have passed on his traits to Indra, becoming a colourless epithet applied to various divinities. From *vṛtrahán*, Renou suggests, the figure of Vṛtra would have emerged, crystallizing around Indra in the form of a dragon, obstructor of Waters.

[20] The twins are 'most Indra-like' (RV 1:182:2a *índratamā*) and are twice addressed as 'you two eminent Vṛtra-slayers' (RV 8:8:9c, 22c *vṛ́trahantamā*). The context of the stanzas, however, is everything but combative. The benevolent twins are not so much fighters and slayers, but rather more the 'celestial Red Cross.'

[21] See pp.15–16 above.

called *vṛtraghnī́* (RV 6:61:7), Indra's epithet fits in perfectly, reflecting her terrifying power:

> *utá syā́ naḥ sárasvatī ghorā́ híraṇyavartaniḥ /*
> *vṛtraghnī́ vaṣṭi suṣṭutím //*
>
> But the well-known Sarasvatī, the terrifying one, golden-tracked,
> slayer of enemies, she wants of us the good praise.[22]

As *vṛtraghnī́* here is the only occurrence of the feminine (as against 106 occurrences of the masculine *vṛtrahán*) in the *Ṛg Veda*, it identifies Sarasvatī as an especially powerful fighter, singling her out from amongst all females.

Also, as one of the Waters, and even more so as their representative,[23] Sarasvatī is connected with Indra in the very act of the slaying of Vṛtra, who is the obstructor of the Waters. By killing Vṛtra, Indra releases them.[24] As we shall see, the rivers are also Indra's wives.[25]

Moreover, two stanzas prior to the one in which Sarasvatī is called *vṛtraghnī́* (RV 6:61:7), she is compared to Indra (RV 6:61:5):

> *yás tvā devi sarasvaty upabrūté dháne hité /*
> *índraṃ ná vṛtratū́rye //*
>
> He who addresses you, O goddess, O Sarasvatī, when the wager
> has been placed,
> as [one addresses] Indra when [it is a matter of] overcoming
> obstacles ...[26]

In another instance, she together with the Maruts is asked to conquer enemies, and while she is mentioned side by side with Indra, he kills the Śaṇḍika chieftain (RV 2:30:8).[27] Sarasvatī and Indra are, additionally, associated in their respective benevolent aspects, as when king Citra's generosity is said to be comparable only to theirs (RV 8:21:17).[28]

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[22] Renou, EVP vol.15, p.131: "Mais la célèbre Sarasvatī, la terrifiante, aux rails d'or, tueuse d'ennemis, elle veut de nous la bonne louange." As Renou notes (EVP vol.15, p.132), *híraṇyavartani* is an epithet usual to the Aśvins.

[23] See pp.16–18 (Sarasvatī and the Āpas) above.

[24] Benveniste and Renou 1934, especially pp.141–46.

[25] See p.50 below.

[26] Renou, EVP vol. 15, p.131: "Celui qui t'adresse la parole, ô déesse, ô Sarasvatī, quand l'enjeu a été placé, comme (on s'adresse à) Indra quand (il s'agit de) surmonter lcs résistances ..."

[27] *sárasvati tvám asmā́ṁ aviḍḍhi marútvatī dhṛṣatī́ jeṣi śátrūn / tyáṃ cic chárdhantaṃ taviṣīyámāṇam índro hanti vṛṣabháṁ śáṇḍikānām //.*

[28] *índro vā ghéd íyan magháṁ sárasvatī vā subhágā dadír vásu / tváṃ vā citra dāśúṣe //.* Citra seems to have been one of several kings who lived on the banks of the Sarasvatī (RV

1.4.2 Pā́vīravī kanyā̀

There is a possibility that Sarasvatī's epithet *pā́vīravī kanyā̀* (RV 6:49:7a) may be connected with Indra, for, although his weapon, the thunderbolt, is usually referred to as a *vájra*, in one instance it is called a *pávīrava* (RV 1:174:4b),[29] which would actually make her the daughter of Indra's thunderbolt, 'la fille de la foudre' as translated by Bergaigne.[30]

Geldner, however, understands both *pā́vīravī kanyā̀* (RV 6:49:7a) and *pā́vīravī* (RV 10:65:13a) as the daughter of Pavīru,[31] whom Grassman, Ludwig, and Roth render as lightning.[32] Likewise, Renou interprets *pā́vīravī kanyā̀* to mean the daughter of lightning.[33] Their understanding of Pavīru as lightning seems to be based on taking *pā́vīravī* and *tanyatú* (thunder) together in 10:65:13a, in which case the daughter of Pavīru is thunder which arises from lightning (Pavīru) and thus makes her the daughter of lightning. *Pā́vīravī* and *tanyatú*, however, need not be taken together, for they appear amidst a list of divine figures, of which they may well be two separate ones: *pā́vīravī tanyatúr ékapād ajó divó dhartā́ síndhur ā́paḥ samudríyaḥ / víśve devā́saḥ śṛṇavan vácāṁsi me sárasvatī sahá dhībhíḥ púrandhyā //.*

At any rate, the possible connection with Indra is only if the *pávīrava* is taken as his weapon (RV 1:174:4b). It is, after all, Indra who releases the rivers by slaying Vṛtra with his *vájra* (e.g., RV 1:61:10a–c).[34]

8:21:18ab *cítra íd rā́jā rājakā́ íd anyaké yaké sárasvatīm ánu /*). One might also consider 6:52:6ab, where Indra comes near accompanied by Sarasvatī swelling with rivers: *índro nédiṣṭham ávasā́gamiṣṭhaḥ sárasvatī síndhubhiḥ pínvamānā /* "Indra, [because it is he who is] the best in coming to help, in the closest way; Sarasvatī swells [swelling] with rivers ..." (Renou, EVP vol.5, p.37: "Indra, [car c'est lui qui est] le mieux venant à l'aide, de la façon la plus proche; Sarasvatī gonfle [gonflant] avec les fleuves ...")

[29] 1:174:4ab *śéṣan nú tá indra sásmin yónau práśastaye pávīravasya mahnā́ /* "That they may rest now, these [enemies], in the same place, O Indra, for the glorification of the thunderbolt, powerfully!" (Renou, EVP vol.17, p.51: "Qu'ils reposent donc, ces [ennemis], en un même séjour, ô Indra, pour la glorification du foudre, puissamment!")

[30] Bergaigne 1963, vol.1, p.252.

[31] Geldner 1951, vol.2, p.150 (6:49:7a); vol.3, p.239 (10:65:13a).

[32] Grassman 1873, pp.795, 809; Ludwig 1876, vol.1, p.232, no.216 (6:49:7a) and vol.1, p.247, no.227 (10:65:13a); Böhtlingk and Roth 1855–75, vol.4, p.696.

[33] Renou, EVP vol.5, p.32.

[34] *asyéd evá śávasā śuṣántaṃ ví vṛścad vájreṇa vṛtrám índraḥ / gā́ ná vrāṇā́ avánīr amuñcat* ... "It is by his power alone that Indra has torn up Vṛtra, who was snorting, with the thunderbolt. The rivers, enclosed like cows, he has liberated them ..." (Renou, EVP vol.17, p.24: "C'est par sa seule force qu'Indra a déchiqueté du foudre Vṛtra qui soufflait. Les rivières, enfermées comme des vaches, il les libéra ...")

1.4.3 *The Rivers as Indra's Wives*

The rivers set free by Indra, referred to as the bull, are said to be his wives, rather than his daughters (RV 5:42:12):

dámūnaso apáso yé suhástā
vṛ́ṣṇaḥ pátnīr nadyò vibhvataṣṭā́ḥ /
sárasvatī bṛhaddivótá rākā́
daśasyántīr varivasyantu śubhrā́ḥ //

The masters of the house active at work, [the Ṛbhus] with skillful hands,
the Rivers, spouses of the bull [Indra] fashioned by Vibhvan,
Sarasvatī [having arrived] from high heaven, as well as Rākā,
the brilliant [goddesses], may they show themselves as being wide,
honoring [us] in a worthy manner.[35]

This stanza presents some difficulties in that Sarasvatī appears to be mentioned twice: as a river, she is necessarily one of Indra's wives, and yet her name appears in the second half of the stanza as if she were not intended to be included amongst the rivers. According to Sāyaṇa, her mention may refer either to the river of that name or to her as the goddess Speech.[36] Perhaps the *Ṛg Veda* poet wished to single her out as the greatest of rivers and placed her, as a goddess, together with Rākā, another female deity. As spouse of Indra, it is indeed appropriate that his epithet *vṛtrahán* in the feminine form (6:61:7c *vṛtraghnī́*) should be applied to her, and even more so only to her, since she is being singled out from amongst all rivers in 5:42:12.

1.4.4 Vīrápatnī

In the same stanza (RV 6:49:7) in which Sarasvatī is called *pā́vīravī kanyā̀*, she is also identified as *vīrápatnī*, 'whose husband is a hero.' A Vīrapatnī river, furthermore, is mentioned in a hymn to Indra (RV 1:104:4cd):

añjasī́ kuliśī́ vīrápatnī páyo hinvānā́ udábhir bharante //

Añjasī, Kuliśī, Vīrapatnī bring milk with their waters, inciting themselves [to act].[37]

[35] Renou, EVP vol.5, p.23: "Les maîtres de maison actifs-à-l'oeuvre, (les Ṛbhu) aux bonnes mains, les Rivières épouses du taureau (Indra), façonnées par Vibhvan, Sarasvatī (venue) du haut du ciel, ainsi que Rākā, les brillantes (déesses), qu'elles se montrent larges, (nous) honorant-dignement!"
[36] *sarasvatī etannāmikā nadī vāg devī vā* (Rig-Veda-Samhitā: *The Sacred Hymns of the Brāhmans together with the Commentary of Sāyaṇāchārya*, 1890–92, vol.2, p.585).
[37] Renou, EVP vol. 17, p.39: "Añjasī, Kuliśī, Vīrapatnī apportent le lait avec leurs eaux, s'incitant (à agir)."

The identity of either the *vīrá* of Vīrapatnī or of Vīrapatnī herself, however, is entirely unclear. Airi's[38] suggestion that this Vīrapatnī in 1:104:4c refers to Sarasvatī is an over-interpretation based on insufficient evidence. Even if one were to understand the *vīrá* to be Indra, since hymn 1:104 is dedicated to him, the rivers in general—and not just Sarasvatī (even though she is singled out from amongst them in 5:42:12)—are the bull's wives (5:42:12b).

Thus *vīrápatnī* cannot be interpreted as defining Sarasvatī's relationship to Indra. As for *pā́vīravī kanyā̀*, it may or may not connect her with Indra. Within the context of the *Ṛg Veda*, it may at best be said that as a river, or as a representative of the Āpas released by Indra in the Vṛtra myth, Sarasvatī is his wife.

1.4.5 *Mother and Consort*

In the *Yajur Veda*, however, Sarasvatī's specific relationship to Indra is more clearly defined. In the Sautrāmaṇī, as we have seen,[39] she functions as his mother (or surrogate mother), giving him rebirth. On the other hand, she is also, together with Iḍā and Bhāratī, Indra's consort (VS 20:343 ≅ MS 3:11:1 [140, 10–11] = KāṭhS 38:6 [108, 3–4] = TB 2:6:8:3):

tisró devī́r haviṣā várdhamānā
índraṃ juṣāṇā́ jánayo ná pátnīḥ /
áchinnaṃ tántuṃ páyasā sárasvat[ī
í]ḍā devī́ bhā́ratī viśvátūrtiḥ //

The three goddesses growing by means of oblation,
enjoying Indra like wives,[40]
Sarasvatī, heavenly Iḍā, and all-conquering Bhāratī
with their swelling milk [enjoying] the unbroken thread
(warp of the loom) [of sacrifice] ...

Although the above stanza only likens the three goddesses to Indra's consorts, in two other passages they are identified as such:

VS 28:8
... tisró devī́ḥ ... índrapatnīḥ ...

VS 28:18ab
devī́s tisrás tisró devī́ḥ pátim índram avardhayan /

[38] Airi 1977, p.17.
[39] See p.46 above.
[40] Literally, 'women who are wives.'

Sarasvatī is thus both mother and consort to Indra. Ambiguity in her relationship to a male figure resurfaces in another form in Puranic lore, where she simultaneously assumes the roles of daughter and consort in her relationship to Brahmā,[41] derived from the connection of Vāc and Prajāpati in the Brāhmaṇas.[42] Had it been possible to define her relation to Indra in the *Ṛg Veda* in terms of *pāvīravī kanyā* and *vīrápatnī*, the parallels would have been very interesting.

Sarasvatī, however, is not only the consort of Indra in the *Yajur Veda*, but also that of the Aśvins, and, as such, carries Indra's newly-fashioned body in her womb (VS 19:94ab).[43] This is indeed a new development, for, in the *Ṛg Veda* (10:131:5a), the relationship of the twins to Indra is likened to that of parents to a son: *putrám iva pitárāv aśvínobhā*. With the elaboration of the incident in the *Yajur Veda*, Sarasvatī becomes the mother figure, and thus the consort of the Aśvins. Already in the *Ṛg Veda* she was called most motherly (2:41:16a), invoked to grant progeny (2:41:17d), and requested to place the embryo in a woman's womb (10:184:2b).[44] As a river, her connection with life-giving Waters, her very being, is far greater than that of the Aśvins. Indra is thus regenerated and reborn of the waters of life embodied in Sarasvatī's womb.

2. Sarasvatī and Speech

The physician Sarasvatī, as noted above, bestows on Indra his characteristic qualities by means of *vā́c* (VS 19:12cd).[45] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, with the fully established identification of Sarasvatī and Vāc, it says the Aśvins cured Indra by means of speech, for Sarasvatī is speech (5:5:4:16): *átha yát sārasvató bhávati / vā́g vái sárasvatī vācā́ vā́ enam aśvínāv abhiṣajyatām tátho evàinam eṣá etád vācaìvá bhiṣajyati tásmāt sārasvató bhavati //.*

In the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (9:30), Sarasvatī is either the controller of speech (*vācó yantúr*), or speech itself (*vācó*) who is the controller (*yantúr*):

[41] See pp.118–21 below.
[42] See pp.60ff below.
[43] Quoted and discussed on p.46 above.
[44] These passages are quoted on pp.14–15 (and notes) above.
[45] Quoted on p.46, note 8 above.

> *sárasvatyai vācó yantúr yantríye dadhāmi*
>
> I place [you] in the control of the controller[,] of speech, of Sarasvatī.[46]

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (5:2:2:13) explains the passage as follows:

> *sárasvatyai vācó yantúr yantríye dadhāmī́ti vā́g vái sárasvatī tád enaṃ vācā́ evá yantúr yantríye dadhāti //*
>
> 'I place thee in the leading of Sarasvatī Vāc, the leader,' [VS 9:30b] for Sarasvatī is Vāc: he thus places him in the leading of Vāc, the leader.[47]

Although there are *Yajur Veda* passages wherein Sarasvatī and Vāc are perceived as distinct from one another (e.g., VS 9:27c *vā́caṃ víṣṇuṁ sárasvatīm*), there are others, such as VS 10:30 (*sárasvatyā vācā́*) and VS 21:58 (*vā́caṁ sárasvatīm*),[48] where the two are clearly identified. In the Aśvamedha (horse sacrifice) dealt with in VS 22–25, the Maina bird speaking like a human [being] is offered to Sarasvatī (*sárasvatyai śā́riḥ puruṣavā́k*),[49] as is the tip of the tongue of the sacrificial horse (*sárasvatyā agrajihvám*).[50] Thus the Sarasvatī-Vāc connection/identification is evidently there, but not yet solidly established, as in the Brāhmaṇas.

3. Sarasvatī and the Ewe

An interesting new development in the *Yajur Veda* is Sarasvatī's association with the ewe (f. *meṣī́*) or the ram (m. *meṣá*). While the ewe is offered to her in the Black *Yajur Veda* in order to obtain her help in matters of speech, for Sarasvatī is speech,[51] the ram is sacrificed to her during the Sautrāmaṇī (VS 21:40 *meṣáṁ sárasvatyai*).[52] VS 24:4 refers

[46] The dative *sárasvatyai* is used here as a genitive, as in the Brāhmaṇas. See Whitney 1889, p.104, no.307h; p.134, no.365d. Cf. VS 18:37c *sárasvatyai vācó yantúr yantreṇā* "I consecrate [*abhiṣiñcāmi*] you by the control of the controller[,] of speech, Sarasvatī."
[47] Translation by Julius Eggeling in 1882–1900, vol.41, p.39.
[48] See also MS 2:3:5 [32, 3] (... *vā́k sárasvatī* ...) and KāṭhS 11:8 [154, 1] (... *vā́k sárasvatī* ...).
[49] VS 24:33. Cf. TS 5:5:12:1.
[50] VS 25:1.
[51] MS 2:3:5 [32, 3]; KāṭhS 11:8 [154, 1].
[52] See also VS 21:41 (quoted in the following paragraph in the main text), 44, 46–47, 59–60; MS 3:11:2 [143, 2] (... *meṣáṁ sárasvatyai* ...); TS 1:8:21:1e (... *sārasvatáṃ meṣám* ...).

to three kinds of ewes[53] presented to Sarasvatī: *phalgū́r lohitorṇī́ palakṣī́ tā́ḥ sārasvatyàḥ*. Furthermore, according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (13:2:2:4), a ewe is offered to her in the Aśvamedha sacrifice: *sārasvatī́ṃ meṣī́m adhástād dhánvoḥ /*.[54]

During the Sautrāmaṇī, the *hótar* worships Sarasvatī, offering the omentum of a ram for her enjoyment (VS 21:41): *hótā yakṣat sárasvatīṃ meṣásya vapā́yā médaso juṣátāṁ havír hótar yája /*. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (12:7:1:12), the ram became hers because it was given to her by the gods as a reward for healing Indra:

> *té sárasvatīm abruvan / tváṃ vái bháiṣajyam asi tvám imáṃ bhiṣajyéti sȁbravīd ástu me bhāgá íti tè 'bruvan yá eṣó 'viḥ sá te bhāgá íti táthéti tásmāt sārasvató meṣó bhavati //*
>
> They (the gods) said to Sarasvatī, "Verily, thou art healing medicine: heal thou this one!" She replied, "Let there be a guerdon for me!" They spake, "That ram there shall be thy guerdon!" She said, "So be it!" And therefore the ram is sacred to Sarasvatī.[55]

Sarasvatī's association with the ram in this context is clearly on the basis of Indra's connection, if not identification, with it. Already in the *Ṛg Veda*, Indra takes its form (8:2:40a–c):

> *itthā́ dhī́vantam adrivaḥ kāṇvám médhyātithim /*
> *meṣó bhūtò 'bhí yán náyaḥ //*
>
> O Lord of the Pressing Stone, [you have listened to] Medhyātithi, the descendant of Kaṇva, whose wish was thus [i.e., for heaven],
> when you, having become a ram, conducted him toward [his goal].[56]

[53] According to Mahīdhara, 'she-goats': *phalgūḥ apuṣṭaśarīrā lohitorṇī raktaromavatī palakṣī śvetā palakṣaśabdo valakṣārtha śvetaparyāyaḥ tās tisro 'jāḥ sārasvatyaḥ* ... This follows ŚB 12:7:2:7 (... *sārasvatī́r ávīr* ...) and 5:5:4:1 (*ávir mahlā́ sārasvatī́ bhavati*). Eggeling (1882–1900, vol.41, p.129), however, translates *ávir mahlā́* as a 'ewe with teats in the dewlap.'

[54] "... a ewe for Sarasvatī beneath the (horse's) jaws ..." (Eggeling 1882–1900, vol.44, p.300.)

[55] Eggeling 1882–1900, vol.44, p.216.

[56] Cf. 1:51:1ab *abhí tyám meṣam puruhūtám ṛgmíyam índraṃ gīrbhír madatā vásvo arṇavám* / "That well-known Ram invoked countless times, Indra who is worthy of the stanza, intoxicate him with songs, he who is a flood of wealth ..." (Renou, EVP vol.17, p.14: "Ce fameux Bélier maintes fois invoqué, Indra digne de la strophe, enivrez le de chants, lui qui est un flot de richesse ..."); 1:52:1ad *tyáṁ sú meṣám mahayā svarvídam* ... *éndraṃ vavṛtyām ávase suvṛktíbhiḥ* // "That well-known Ram, I want to glorify him, he who provides the sun ... I want Indra to turn toward [me] ... so that [they, Indra's favours, may] help me—through [my] beautiful hymns." (Renou, EVP vol.17, p.16: "Ce fameux Bélier, je veux le magnifier, lui qui procure le soleil ... je voudrais faire tourner vers [moi] ... Indra, afin qu'[ils m'] aident, —avec de beaux hymnes." [In the English rendering, I have added the specification that 'they' refers to 'Indra's favours' and that the 'beautiful hymns' are those of the poet himself.])

In the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (3:234), as Wendy Doniger (O'Flaherty) points out,[57] this verse is elaborated into the story of the appearance of Indra as Medhātithi's ram at the latter's sacrifice:

> *teṣāṁ ha smendro medhātither meṣasya rūpaṃ kṛtvā somaṃ vratayati / taṁ ha sma bādhante medhātither no meṣas somaṃ vratayatīti / sa u ha smaiṣāṁ svam eva rūpaṃ kṛtvā somaṃ vratayati / tato ha vā idam arvācīnaṃ medhātither meṣa ity āhvyanti /*
>
> Indra, having taken the form of the ram of Medhātithi, used to drink (as a *vrata*) their Soma. They drove him away, (saying,) "Medhātithi's ram drinks our Soma." Indra, having taken his own form, used to drink the Soma. Since then they call [on] Indra, 'ram of Medhātithi.'

In VS 19:90 (≅ MS 3:11:9 [154, 6] = KāṭhS 38:3 [104, 3] = TB 2:6:4:5) a ram is used like a wool strainer for the vigour in Indra's nose (*ávir ná meṣó nasí vīryȁya*). According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (12:7:1:3), the ram is, in fact, Indra's *vīryà*, which flowed out of his nostrils after he had drunk Soma:

> *nā́sikābhyām evȁsya vīryàm asravat /*
> *só 'viḥ paśúr abhavan meṣáḥ*
>
> From the nostrils flowed his vigour.
> That became a sheep, the animal, namely a ram.

The ram is a traditional symbol of virility, often associated with fertility cults.[58] In the Varuṇapraghāsa ritual performed at the beginning of the rainy season—the season "which begins the cycle of fertility"[59]—a ram and a ewe made of unbaked dough are offered into the fire.[60] As Stephanie Jamison explains,[61] they represent the sacrificer's wife and her 'lover,' and the ritual allows the transfer of the sexual force of animals into the householder's family, so a child can be born. In the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* story of Ahalyā (1:48:6–10), when Indra is castrated for sexual transgression, he is made whole again with a ram's testicles:

> *ayaṃ meṣaḥ savṛṣaṇaḥ śakro hy avṛṣaṇaḥ kṛtaḥ /*
> *meṣasya vṛṣaṇau gṛhya śakrāyāśu prayacchata //*

[57] O'Flaherty 1985, p.60.

[58] Litvinskii 1987, p.233.

[59] Jamison 1996, p.92.

[60] *āmapeṣāṇāṃ meṣapratikṛtī bhavataḥ / meṣam adhvaryuḥ karoti meṣīṃ pratiprasthātā / striyāḥ strivyañjanāni / puṁsaḥ puṃvyañjanāni /* (*Āpastambha Śrauta Sūtra* 8:5:42–8:6:2).

[61] Jamison 1996, pp.94–95.

aphalas tu kṛto meṣaḥ parāṃ tuṣṭiṃ pradāsyati /
bhavatāṃ harṣaṇārthāya ye ca dāsyanti mānavāḥ //

agnes tu vacanaṃ śrutvā pitṛdevāḥ samāgatāḥ /
utpāṭya meṣavṛṣaṇau sahasrākṣe nyavedayan //

tadā prabhṛti kākutstha pitṛdevāḥ samāgatāḥ /
aphalān bhuñjate meṣān phalais teṣām ayojayan //

indras tu meṣavṛṣaṇas tadā prabhṛti rāghava /
gautamasya prabhāvena tapasaś ca mahātmanaḥ //

Śakra has been emasculated. But here is a ram whose testicles are intact.
Take the ram's testicles and give them to Śakra at once.

The castrated ram will give you the greatest satisfaction,
as will those men who offer one for your pleasure.

When the divine ancestors assembled there heard Agni's words,
they tore out the ram's testicles and gave them to thousand-eyed Indra.

And from that time onward, Kākutstha, the assembly of the divine ancestors
eats castrated rams, reserving their testicles for Indra.

And so, from that time onward, Rāghava,
through the power of the great Gautama's asceticism,
Indra has had a ram's testicles.[62]

Although Sarasvatī's association with the ram is based on Indra's identification with this animal, she is also connected with the ram in its traditional virility symbolism. She is, in a sense, the other side of the equation: while the ram represents virility, Sarasvatī bestows fertility. She grants beings progeny (RV 2:41:17d), placing the embryo in a woman's womb (RV 10:184:2b). By virtue of her waters, she is a healer and life-giver, who gives birth (rebirth) to Indra. Semen, it might be added, is not infrequently compared to water, as in TS 6:5:8:6.[63]

Sarasvatī's connection with the ram has persisted throughout the ages, as can be seen in surviving northeast Indian sculptures, primarily from the eleventh or twelfth century, where the ram is represented below the goddess.[64] Even in relatively recent times, ram sacrifices have continued to be offered to Sarasvatī in some parts of the Dacca district.[65]

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[62] Translation by Robert P. Goldman in 1984, p.217.
[63] *apá úpa prá vartayati réta evá tát siñcaty ūrúṇó 'pa prá vartayaty ūrúṇā hí rétaḥ sicyáte* "He [the *néṣṭar*] causes water to follow [*sic*] along [the thigh of the sacrificer's wife]; verily thus he pours seed; along the thigh he causes it to flow, for along the thigh is seed poured." (Translation by Keith in 1914, vol.2, p.544. Bracketed portions are mine.)
[64] See, for instance, K. Bhattacharyya 1983, figs.8–10.
[65] Bhattasali 1929, p.187.

CHAPTER FOUR

BRĀHMAṆAS

1. Sarasvatī as Speech

1.1 vā́g vái sárasvatī

Sarasvatī is identified with speech already in the Saṃhitās, as we have seen.[1] The Brāhmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇa passages of the *Maitrāyaṇī*, the *Kāṭhaka*, the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha*, and the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* emphatically, consistently, and repeatedly assert this identity: *vā́g vái sárasvatī.*[2] Even when the water of the Sarasvatī river is used for consecration, the individual is thereby said to be sprinkled with speech (MS 4:3:9 [49, 8–9]):

vācā́ vā́ etám abhí ṣiñcanti yám abhiṣiñcánti vā́k sárasvatī sārasvatī́r ā́po yát sārasvatī́bhiḥ sūyáte yā́vaty evá vā́k táyā sūyate //

It is with speech that they consecrate this [king], when they consecrate him [with the waters]. Sarasvatī is speech. The waters are Sarasvatī's. When he is ordained [in the Rājasūya rite] with Sarasvatī's [waters], [then] he is ordained with as much speech as there is.[3]

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11:2:6:3) Sarasvatī pairs with her male counterpart Sarasvant, as speech with mind: *mánaś caivā̀sya vā́k cāghārāu sárasvāṁś ca sárasvatī ca.*[4] It is Sarasvatī who placed speech in created beings (*sárasvaty evá sṛṣṭā́su vā́cam adadhāt*),[5] and thus, as the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* explains, the faculty of speech of the chronically ill goes back to the goddess, and it is then restored to the afflicted by way of an offering to her (2:3:11:1–2):

agníṃ vā́ etásya śárīraṃ gacchati ... sárasvatīṃ vā́g ... yásya jyóg ā́máyati yó jyógāmayāvī syā́d yó vā kāmáyeta sárvam ā́yur iyām íti tásmā etám

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[1] AV 5:7:5ab (*vācā́ sárasvatyā*); VS 10:30 (*sárasvatyā vācā́*). See pp.42, 53 above.
[2] E.g., MS 2:5:2 [49, 4]; KāṭhS 12:13 [175, 12]; TS 2:1:2:6; AiB 2:24:8; KauṣB 5:2:8; ŚB 4:2:5:14.
[3] Cf. ŚB 5:3:4:3 (= 5:3:5:8) *vā́g vái sárasvatī vācaìvainam etád abhí ṣiñcati.*
[4] Cf. ŚB 7:5:1:31 (= 11:2:4:9) *máno vái sárasvān vā́k sárasvatī.*
[5] KāṭhS 35:20 [67, 11] = KapS 47:18 [63, 18] = MS 1:10:5 [145, 16].

> *iṣṭiṃ nir vaped āgneyám aṣṭā́kapālam ... sārasvatáṃ carúm ... agnér evā́sya śárīraṃ niṣkrīṇā́ti ...* [1] *... sārasvaténa vā́caṃ dadhāti ...* [2]
>
> Of him, the body goes to Agni ... the speech to Sarasvatī ... he who has been sick for a long time. He who may have been sick for a long time or who should desire "I would go the full length of [my] life," for him he (the priest) should offer this *iṣṭi* (wish offering in the form of a cake made of rice, barley, and pulse) on eight potsherds dedicated to Agni ... a bowl of porridge dedicated to Sarasvatī ... He thus redeems his body from Agni ... [1] ... and by [the bowl] dedicated to Sarasvatī, he (the priest) puts speech [back into him] ... [2]

Appropriately, the tip of the tongue of the sacrificial horse, as already noted in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (25:1), is offered to Sarasvatī during the Aśvamedha.[6]

There is also a custom wherein a person unable to speak (or to speak properly) offers a ewe to Sarasvatī, for she is Speech. In return, Sarasvatī bestows speech on the individual, who is then able to speak well. As the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* describes, "he from whom speech draws away should offer a ewe to Sarasvatī, for Sarasvatī is speech, [and] Sarasvatī draws away from him, from whom speech draws away."[7] The individual may actually have the ability to speak, but, presumably owing to some other impediment, is unable to do so (TS 2:1:2:6–7):

> *sārasvatī́ṃ meṣī́m ā́ labheta yá īśvaró vācó váditoḥ sán vā́caṃ ná váded vā́g vái sárasvatī sárasvatīm evá svéna bhāgadhéyenópa dhāvati sáivā́smin* [6] *vā́caṃ dadhāti pravaditā́ vācó bhavati ...* [7]
>
> He who, though being able to speak, would not speak [fluently] should offer a ewe dedicated to Sarasvatī, for Sarasvatī is speech. It is to Sarasvatī that he has recourse with her own share. It is she who places speech in him, [and thus] he would speak.[8]

This may refer to one who stutters, for example. It is by the grace of Sarasvatī, riverine goddess of speech, that he comes to utter his words fluently, as effortless fluidity of speech is akin to the uninterrupted flow of a stream or river, i.e., Sarasvatī.

Within a general sacrificial context, whatever defect knowingly or unknowingly may have occurred through omission is removed by means

[6] See p.53 above.

[7] Kāṭhs 12:13 [175, 11–12] *sārasvatī́ṃ meṣī́m ā́ labheta yásmād vā́g apakrā́med vā́g vái sárasvatī sárasvaty etásmād ápa krāmati yásmād vā́g apakrā́mati.*

[8] TS 2:1:2:6 = TS 3:4:3:3–4. I translate *pravaditā́ vācó bhavati* as "he would speak," following Kielhorn (1898, p.19 [repr. 1969, p.296]), and in line with *yá īśvaró vācó váditoḥ sán vā́caṃ ná váded* "he who, though being able to speak, would not speak."

of speech, of Sarasvatī, says the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (1:11:9 [170, 21–171, 3]):

> *... vā́g vái sárasvatī vācā́ yajñáḥ sáṃtato vācáivá yajñáṁ sáṃ tanoti yád vái yajñásya vidvā́n ná karóti yác cā́vidvān antaréti tác chidráṃ tád vācáivá sárasvatyā kalpayati ...*[9]
>
> Sarasvatī is speech. Through speech the sacrifice is [made] continuous. It is through speech that he (the sacrificer) makes the sacrifice continuous. That [part] of the sacrifice which he knowingly does not perform or that which he unknowingly passes over is a disruption. That he puts in order through Sarasvatī who is speech.

Sarasvatī brings about ritual continuity not only because she is identified with speech, but through her own identity as a flowing river representing uninterruptedness. Through Sarasvatī, who embodies flowing speech, the sacrifice is performed continuously, and thus successfully. A connection between speech and Sarasvatī, therefore, may be found in the fluidity of the river.

Conversely, Sarasvatī may be invoked for negative effects on an adversary's speech, causing a break in its fluency. One who litigates regarding a field or cattle should offer a milch cow that has ceased to give milk (*dhenuṣṭarī́*) to Sarasvatī. Thus he averts speech from his adversaries by means of *vā́c*, explains the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (2:5:4 [52, 11–13]): *sārasvatī́ṃ dhenuṣṭarī́m ā́ labheta yáḥ kṣétre paśúṣu vā vivádeta vā́g vái sárasvatī vācáiváiṣāṃ vā́caṃ vṛṅkte.* Likewise, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (3:3:9), the officiant, it is said, should recite the Sarasvatī mantras in confusion if he wishes to deprive of speech the patron of a sacrifice:

> *yaṃ kāmayeta vācainaṃ vy ardhayānīti sārasvatam asya lubdhaṁ śaṁsed ṛcaṃ vā padaṃ vātīyāt tenaiva tal lubdhaṃ vācaivainaṃ tad vy ardhayati*
>
> If he desire of a man, 'Let me deprive him of speech,' he should recite for him (the triplet) to Sarasvatī in confusion; he should pass over a verse or a line; thereby is it confused; verily thus he deprives him of speech.[10]

1.2 *Speech as Knowledge*

Vāc, however, as we have seen, has never been merely speech.[11] In the Brāhmaṇas she is that which is embodied in and communicated through

[9] MS 1:11:9 [170, 21–171, 3] ≅ KāṭhS 14:9 [208, 17–19].

[10] Translation by Keith in 1920, p.167.

[11] See pp.36–37 above.

speech: she is knowledge. Above all, she is knowledge in the form of the Vedas. Vāc is the mother of the Vedas (*védānāṃ mātā́*).[12] She is also the Vedas themselves (ŚB 6:5:3:4):

> *tryālikhitā́ bhavati tredhāvihitā́ hí vā́g ṛ́co yájūṁṣi sā́māni*
>
> It (a certain brick) is marked with three lines, for Vāc is arranged threefold, as stanzas (*Ṛg Veda*), formulas (*Yajur Veda*), and songs (*Sāma Veda*).[13]

Vāc's territory, however, does extend beyond the Vedas to embrace every form of knowledge. As all waters meet in the ocean, explains the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (14:5:4:11),[14] so all sciences (*vidyā́*) merge in Vāc: *sá yáthā sárvāsām apā́ṁ samudrá ekā́yanám ... eváṁ sárvāsāṃ vidyā́nāṃ vā́g ekā́yanám* //. All that is to be known is known through Vāc, says sage Yājñavalkya to king Janaka in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (14:6:10:6):

> *ṛgvedó yajurvedáḥ sāmavedò 'tharvāṅgirása itihāsáḥ purāṇáṃ vidyā́ upaniṣádaḥ ślókāḥ sūtrā́ṇy anuvyākhyā́nāni vyākhyā́nāni vācaivá samrāṭ prá jñāyante ...*
>
> Through Vāc alone, O sovereign, are known the *Ṛg Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the [mantras of the] Atharvan- and Aṅgiras-priests (= *Atharva Veda*), history, ancient lore, the sciences, the Upaniṣads, verses, aphorisms, explanations, [and] commentaries.[15]

And *vā́g vái sárasvatī*. While Sarasvatī in the *Ṛg Veda* presided over *dhī́*, when inspired thought was translated into speech in the form of recitation, and transmitted as knowledge from generation to generation, Sarasvatī as Vāc became a source of knowledge.

2. Prajāpati and His Daughters

2.1 *Prajāpati and Vāc*

The *Ṛg Veda* notion of Vāc as all-pervading creatress is redefined in the Brāhmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇa passages of the *Yajur Veda* in relation to the creator Prajāpati. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* comment on a passage

[12] TB 2:8:8:5. Cf. ŚB 5:5:5:12 *etád vái sahásraṃ vācáḥ prájātaṃ yád eṣá trayó védaḥ* "this threefold Veda, that is one thousand [utterances] born from speech."

[13] Cf. ŚB 10:5:1:2 *sā́ vā́ eṣā́ vā́k tredhāvihitā́ / ṛ́co yájūṃṣi sā́māni ...*

[14] ŚB 14:5:4:11 = ŚB 14:7:3:12 ≅ BĀU 2:4:11 = BĀU 4:5:12.

[15] ŚB 14:6:10:6 ≅ BĀU 4:1:2.

of the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (9:1), where the Lord of Speech (Vācaspati) is mentioned, it says that Vācaspati means Prajāpati: *prajā́patir vái vācáspátiḥ* (ŚB 5:1:1:16).[16] Prajāpati made himself swell with speech, and he made her his follower: *vācaìvá tát prajā́patiḥ púnar ātmā́nam ā́pyāyayata ... vā́cam ánukām ātmáno 'kuruta ...* (ŚB 3:9:1:7). Speech is Prajāpati's creation or offspring, for she is second to him, but she is also his consort, with whom he unites to create beings, the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* explains (27:1 [137, 8–10]):

> *prajāpatir vā idam āsīt tasya vāg dvitīyāsīt tāṃ mithunaṁ sam abhavat sā garbham adhatta ... semāḥ prajā asṛjata sā prajāpatim eva punaḥ prāviśat ...*
>
> This (all) was Prajāpati. Speech was his second. He united with her, [and] she conceived ... She emitted these creatures, [and] re-entered Prajāpati.

If Prajāpati is to couple with anyone or anything, it must necessarily be with his own offspring, for he is the creator of all and exists alone prior to creation. Prajāpati is also sacrifice,[17] and therefore, as Sylvain Lévi explains,[18] naturally has speech as his helper, since rite is inseparable from formula. It is thus specifically through speech, in one form or another, that Prajāpati chooses to procreate,[19] as the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (7:6:2) indicates:

> *sa ādīdhīta garbho vai me 'yam antar hitas taṃ vācā prajanayā iti*
>
> He thought intently: "This embryo of mine is placed inside [me]. That I shall engender through speech."

Sometimes instead of speech it is by means of specific words that Prajāpati creates, as in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11:1:6:3):

> *sá bhū́r íti vyā́harat sèyáṃ pṛthivy àbhavad bhúva íti tád idám antárikṣam abhavat svàr íti sā̀sáu dyáur abhavat*

[16] *Vācáspáti* appears already in the *Ṛg Veda* as an epithet of Soma (9:26:4c; 9:101:5c), for instance. Originally two independent words, *vācás* and *páti*, it is traditionally considered a compound, although the preservation of the two accents suggests two separate words. Vācaspati is also called Bṛhaspati and Brahmaṇaspati.

[17] E.g., MS 3:6:5 [65, 3] *yajñó vái prajā́patiḥ*; ŚB 1:7:4:4 *sá vái yajñá evá prajā́patiḥ*; AiB 7:7:2 *prajāpatir yajñaḥ*.

[18] Lévi 1898, pp.21–22.

[19] There are indeed passages where Prajāpati is said to create or procreate alone (e.g., TB 2:2:9:1–10). My study, however, is not on Prajāpati as such, and therefore I discuss only the passages where he appears either with Vāc or another of his daughters, in so far as this father-daughter relationship bears on the Puranic Brahmā-Sarasvatī connection. For a study of Prajāpati, see Lévi 1898, pp.13–35 and Gonda 1986, for instance.

> He uttered *bhū́ḥ*, [and] that (*bhū́ḥ*) became this earth. [He uttered] *bhúvaḥ*, [and] that (*bhúvaḥ*) became this intermediary space. [He uttered] *svàḥ*, [and] that (*svàḥ*) became yonder sky.

Thus when Prajāpati utters words, it is those very words that transform themselves into the earth, the intermediary space, and the sky. The speech he pronounces becomes creation, and therefore creation is speech that has taken form. Likewise in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, Prajāpati brings the universe into being by emitting three distinct sounds, thereby dividing all-pervading speech[20] into the earth, the intermediate space (middle region), and the sky (PB 20:14:2):

> *prajāpatir vā idam eka āsīt tasya vāg eva svam āsīd vāg dvitīyā sa aikṣatemām eva vācaṃ vi sṛjā iyaṃ vā idaṁ sarvaṃ vibhavanty eṣyatīti sa vācaṃ vy asṛjata sedaṁ sarvaṃ vibhavanty ait sordhvodātanod yathāpāṃ dhārā santataivaṃ tasyā eti tṛtīyam acchinat tad bhūmir abhavad abhūd iva vā idam iti tad bhūmer bhūmitvaṃ keti tṛtīyam acchinat tad antarikṣam abhavad antareva vā idam iti tad antarikṣasyāntarikṣatvaṁ ho iti tṛtīyam ūrdhvam ud āsyat tat dyaur abhavad adyutad iva vā ada iti tad divo divatvam //*

> This [all] was Prajāpati alone. Only speech was his own, speech his second. He considered: "Let me emit only this speech. She will go on pervading all this." He emitted speech, and she went on pervading all this. She extended upward like a continuous stream of water.[21] Saying '*a*,' he cut a third of her. That became the earth. "This has come into existence (***abhūt***) as it were," [he said]. That is why the earth is called ***bhūmi***. Saying '*ka*,' he cut a third [of her]. That became the middle region. "This is in the middle (***antarā***) as it were," [he said]. That is why the middle region is called ***antarikṣa***. Saying '*ho*,' he threw upward a third [of her]. That became the sky. "That yonder has lit up (***adyutat***) as it were," [he said]. "That is why the sky is called ***dyu*** (*dyaus*)."

Thus there are different ways in which Prajāpati joins with his offspring Vāc to create: he unites with her as his consort (KāṭhS 27:1 [137, 8–10]; PB 7:6:2–3) and she then emits beings, or he pronounces either words or sounds (speech), which take form (ŚB 11:1:6:3; PB 20:14:2).[22]

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[20] Cf. ŚB 6:1:1:9 ... *vā́g evā̀sya sā̀sṛjyata sèdáṁ sárvam āpnot ...*

[21] This "continuous stream of water" may be interpreted as the riverine goddess Sarasvatī.

[22] Another possibility is found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, where beings are emitted after he utters a particular formula (2:33:5): *prajāpatir vā idam eka evāgra āsa so 'kāmayata prajāyeya bhūyān syām iti sa tapo 'tapyata sa vācam ayacchat sa saṃvatsarasya parastād vyāharad dvādaśakṛtvo dvādaśapadā vā eṣā nivid etāṃ vāva tāṃ nividaṃ vyāharat tāṁ sarvāṇi bhūtāny anv asṛjyanta* "In the beginning this (all) was Prajāpati alone. He desired: 'May I procreate. May I become more.' He heated himself. He restrained speech. After a full year he spoke twelve times. This [well-known] invitation formula (*nivid*) has twelve verses. It is this *nivid* which he uttered. After that (*nivid*) all beings were emitted."

2.2 Ṛg Veda *Background*

The theme of the union of the father with his daughter occurs already in the *Ṛg Veda*. In fact, if we carefully compare the relevant *Ṛg Veda* passages with the Brāhmaṇa accounts of Prajāpati and his daughter, as we shall do, it becomes amply clear that the Brāhmaṇa stories are derived from the *Ṛg Veda* stanzas. The Brāhmaṇa narratives, in turn, form the basis for the Puranic Brahmā-Sarasvatī relationship, as we shall see. Hence these *Ṛg Veda* stanzas and their Brāhmaṇa derivatives are of vital importance in understanding the mythology that grew up around Sarasvatī by the time of the Purāṇas.

In previous studies dealing specifically with Brahmā and Sarasvatī or Prajāpati and his daughter, some of the relevant *Ṛg Veda* and Brāhmaṇa passages have been referred to, summarized, and at most a line or so has been quoted.[23] A systematic examination drawing together all the pertinent Vedic stanzas to show their connection with one another, has, as far as I am aware, only been undertaken by Jamison in her work on the Svarbhānu-Sūrya myth.[24] According to Jamison, Prajāpati's incest is derived from Sūrya's union with his daughter, through a substitution of Prajāpati for Sūrya and of the punisher Rudra-Agni for Svarbhānu-Agni. My own interests in the incest story begin, in a sense, where Jamison's study ends, for I attempt to trace the Vedic Prajāpati-Vāc to the Puranic Brahmā-Sarasvatī, and hence my discussion of the relevant Vedic passages is also differently organized.

In regard to the background of the Brahmanical myth of Prajāpati's incest with his daughter, Macdonell cautiously suggests that RV 1:71:5 and 10:61:5–7 'seem' to be the basis for the myth.[25] S. A. Dange refers to Macdonell, but takes only 10:61:5, 7 as "the probable origin of this myth."[26] S. G. Kantawala, on the other hand, does not speak of probabilities, but simply claims the "germs of the incestuous relation between a father and a daughter" as depicted in the *Matsya Purāṇa* to be

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[23] Dixit 1943–44; Kantawala 1958–59; Dange 1963; Kantawala 1980–81. Many of the Brāhmaṇa accounts have been taken up—or rather listed—in the context of Brāhmaṇa studies (see Lévi 1898, pp.20–23, for instance), while the *Ṛg Veda* stanzas have been discussed in Vedic studies (Oldenberg 1909, vol.1, p.74; Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.93, note on 1:71:5; Dange 1979, pp.142–45, for instance).

[24] Jamison 1991, pp.289–303.

[25] Macdonell 1897, p.119.

[26] Dange 1963, p.46.

traceable to RV 1:71:5 and 10:61:5–9.[27] Nevertheless, in referring to the *Ṛg Veda* stanzas as the 'germs' from which the Brahmā-Sarasvatī myth has arisen, he too is being cautious, identifying links in a rather vague, distant way. I suspect what he had in mind here was the Puranic inheritance of the father-daughter incest theme from Vedic literature, rather than direct links between the pertinent passages. Jamison's study, on the other hand, draws numerous threads together, connecting Prajāpati with Sūrya and noting parallels and resemblances between related *Ṛg Veda* and later accounts of Prajāpati's incest and of the Svarbhānu-Sūrya myth.

Let us turn then to the relevant *Ṛg Veda* stanzas.

1:71:5
mahé yát pitrá īṁ rásaṃ divé kár
áva tsarat pṛśanyàś cikitvā́n /
sṛjád ástā dhṛṣatā́ didyúm asmai
svā́yāṃ devó duhitári tvíṣiṃ dhāt //

When he (Agni) had prepared [seminal] fluid for the great father Heaven,
he (Heaven), being aware of flirtations,[28] came down stealthily.
The archer boldly shot his arrow at him,
when the god (Heaven) had put his energy into his own daughter.

This stanza has been interpreted in various rather different ways. He who comes down stealthily is Heaven according to Oldenberg and Renou, the archer according to Geldner.[29] The one referred to as *pṛśanyàś cikitvā́n* is then explained by Oldenberg as Heaven who is aware of the females, by Renou as Heaven who is skilled at flirting, and by Geldner as the archer who is aware of the flirting (of Heaven with his own daughter). In Oldenberg's understanding, therefore, father Heaven comes down stealthily to approach the females, but is driven away by the archer's arrow, and thus turns to his own daughter. According to Geldner and Renou, on

[27] Kantawala 1980–81, p.219. See also Kantawala 1958–59, p.39. The *Matsya Purāṇa* myth referred to by Kantawala is discussed below on pp.118–21.

[28] The feminine noun *pṛśanī́* 'touching' or 'caressing,' may come from root *sparś*[/ *spṛś*], to touch (Mayerhofer 1996, vol.2, pp.163–64). See also Renou, EVP vol.16, p.137: 'gestes d'amour pour attirer' ('amorous gestures to attract'), properly 'attouchements' ('caresses'). The word appears in three passages of the *Ṛg Veda* (1:71:5b; 10:61:8d; 10:73:2a), in the last of which, according to Renou, it means courtesan.

[29] Oldenberg 1909, vol.1, p.74; Renou, EVP vol.12, p.17; Geldner 1951, vol.1, p.93, note on 1:71:5. According to Jamison (1991, p.295, note 286) it seems to be Heaven, but it "may be a poetic broadening of the Sun" or "an admixture of another, very similar incest motif, that of Heaven with Earth." She interprets 1:71:5cd as referring 'at least partially' to the Sūrya-Uṣas incest by translating *tvíṣi-* as 'brilliance' and noting its association with the sun in other *Ṛg Veda* passages (1991, p.296, note 291).

the other hand, on the basis of their interpretation of *pṛśanyàḥ* here as flirtations,[30] Heaven's intention has always been with his own daughter. Despite the difficulties presented by this stanza, what is essential for us is the incestuous nature of the relationship of the father with his own daughter, and the shooting of an arrow at him by an archer.

The incest theme recurs in RV 10:61:5–7, with the main features appearing in stanza 7:[31]

10:61:7
pitā́ yát svā́ṃ duhitáram adhiṣkán
kṣmayā́ rétaḥ saṃjagmānó ní ṣiñcat /
svādhyò [']*janayan bráhma devā́*
vā́stoṣ pátiṃ vratapā́ṃ nír atakṣan //

When the father had jumped on his own daughter,
he poured his semen down into the earth after having united with her.
The gods of good intention produced a *bráhman*,
when they had fashioned out the Lord of the Sacrificial Ground (*vā́stoṣ páti*) who protects observances.

Vā́stoṣ páti, who appears in 10:61:7d, is, according to Oldenberg,[32] the guardian spirit of the place. Geldner, on the other hand, refers to Sāyaṇa, who believes it is Rudra.[33] Clearly on the basis of later accounts of Prajāpati/Brahmā's union with his own daughter, Renou understands the archer in 1:71:5c to be Rudra.[34] Although neither the archer nor *vā́stoṣ páti* can definitely be connected with Rudra in the *Ṛg Veda*,[35] later, *vā́stoṣ páti* does indeed come to be identified with him, as in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (3:4:10:3), for example: *rudráḥ khálu vái vāstoṣpatíḥ*. Rudra also appears in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (4:2:11 [35, 11–15]), *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (1:7:4:1ff.), and *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (3:261–62) accounts of Prajāpati's union with his daughter. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (3:33:2–3), allusion is made to him as Bhūtapati as well as Paśupati, on whom lordship over cattle is bestowed. Rudra, who is called Bhūtapati already in the *Atharva Veda* (2:14:4; 11:2:1; 11:6:21), is referred to as Paśupati in the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (24:3), or—more often—mentioned side by

[30] As mentioned in note 28 above, there is one instance (RV 10:73:2a) in which Renou understands *pṛśanī́* to mean courtesan.

[31] RV 10:61:5–6 describe the sexual act.

[32] Oldenberg 1912, vol.2, p.265 on RV 10:61:7.

[33] Geldner 1951, vol.3, p.228.

[34] Renou, EVP vol.12, p.17.

[35] In RV 7:54:2ab (see p.66), *vā́stoṣ páti* seems to be identified with Soma, who is here referred to as *indu*, 'drop.' At least in this hymn, *vā́stoṣ páti* is clearly not Rudra.

side with *paśupáti-* in the *Atharva Veda* (twelve occurrences) and other texts (e.g., MS 4:2:12 [35, 13–15]; ŚB 5:3:3:7). In this connection, it is not without interest that *vā́stoṣ páti*, together with Soma, is called on in the *Ṛg Veda* (7:54:2ab) to confer prosperity in cattle and horses: *vā́stoṣ pate pratárano na edhi gayasphā́no góbhir áśvebhir indo* /. In the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* account of the incestuous union (8:2:10), neither Rudra nor Paśupati is referred to, but cattle is mentioned.

There is one other passage in the *Ṛg Veda* (3:31:1) noted by Dange,[36] wherein the father-daughter incest is also touched upon:

> *śā́sad váhnir duhitúr naptyàṃ gād*
> *vidvā́ṁ ṛtásya dī́dhitiṁ saparyán* /
> *pitā́ yátra duhitúḥ sékam ṛñján*
> *sáṁ śagmyèna mánasā dadhanvé* //

> [Agni] the conveyor [of the sacrifice] went to the granddaughter,
> [daughter] of the daughter, instructing [her],
> knowing the truth, cherishing the insight,
> when the father, directing his [seminal] flow for the daughter,
> with an able mind let [it] run.

Ṛta is truth and order. Agni who cherishes his own insight into it is thus comparable to *vā́stoṣ páti* who protects the observances (*vratapā́*) in 10:61:7d.

2.3 *Prajāpati and Uṣas or Dyaus*

In the Brāhmaṇas, as we have seen, Prajāpati unites with his daughter Vāc as consort. He also takes other offspring as his consort, namely, Uṣas (Dawn) and Dyaus (Sky). Although the Puranic Brahmā-Sarasvatī relationship is a kind of continuation of that of Prajāpati and Vāc by way of name change, for Prajāpati becomes Brahmā, and Sarasvatī-Vāc are one and the same already in the Brāhmaṇas, Prajāpati's relationships with his other daughters play a significant role in shaping the Brahmā-Sarasvatī myth. They are also the connecting links with the *Ṛg Veda* passages discussed above, from which they are clearly derived. Let us examine then the Brāhmaṇa myths of Prajāpati and Uṣas or Dyaus.

The Brāhmaṇas include five accounts of the story of Prajāpati and his daughter-consort Uṣas or Dyaus:

[36] Dange 1979, p.147.

1) *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (4:2:12 [35, 11–15])
2) *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (1:7:4:1–3)
3) *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (3:33)
4) *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (8:2:10)
5) *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (3:262)

To these may be added a sixth from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* (6:1:1–12), where Prajāpati's incestuous desire for his daughter is passed on to his offspring. From among Uṣas and Dyaus, Uṣas, it should be noted, is the more prominent of the two, with Dyaus appearing as an alternative possibility in the *Śatapatha* (1:7:4:1) and the *Aitareya* (3:33) *Brāhmaṇa* accounts.

2.3.1 Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (4:2:12 [35, 11–15])[37]

In this version of the story, Prajāpati and his daughter take animal forms, as if to reduce the act to an animal level.

> *prajā́patir vái svā́ṃ duhitáram abhy àkāmayatoṣásaṁ sā́ rohíd abhavat tā́m ŕ̥śyo bhūtvā́dhy ait*

> Prajāpati desired his own daughter Uṣas. She became a red deer, [and he,] having become a buck, went on top of her. [35, 11–12]

What followed is derived directly from RV 10:61:7d and 1:71:5c, in that order:

> *tásmā ápavratam achadayat tám ā́yatayābhiparyā́vartata*

> To him (Rudra) it seemed a perversity. He (Rudra) turned round to him (Prajāpati) with an [arrow] aimed at [him]. [35, 12–13]

Vā́stoṣ páti of RV 10:61:7d was characterized as protecting the observances (*vratapā́*). Here, one who comes to be called Paśupati and Rudra [35, 14–15] perceived Prajāpati's union with his daughter Uṣas to be against *vrata* (*ápavrata* [opposite of *ánuvrata*]). Thus, like the archer in RV 1:71:5c who shot his arrow at Heaven, Rudra aimed his arrow at Prajāpati. The alarmed creator tried to stop him, but failed:

> *tásmād vā́ abibhet sò 'bravīt paśūnā́ṃ tvā pátiṃ karomy átha me mā́sthā íti tád vā́ asyaitán nā́ma paśupátir íti tám abhyāyátyāvidhyat sò 'rodīt tád vā́ asyaitán nā́ma rudrá íti*

[37] See also *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 3:6:5 [66, 4–6]: *prajā́patir vai svā́ṃ duhitáram ádhy aid uṣásaṃ tásya rétaḥ párāpatat té devā́ abhisám agachanta ... tád úd agr̥bhṇan ... téna yajñám atanvanta* "Prajāpati went on top of his own daughter Uṣas. His semen flew away. The gods approached [it] together ... [and] picked it up ... With it they extended (performed) the sacrifice."

He (Prajāpati) was afraid of him. He (Prajāpati) said: "I will make you the lord of cattle. So do not shoot at me." Therefore this name of his is 'Lord of Cattle' (Paśupati). Having aimed at him (Prajāpati), he (Paśupati) pierced him. He (Prajāpati) cried (*rud*). That is why he (Paśupati) is called thus, i.e., Rudra.

2.3.2 Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (1:7:4:1–3)

In this account, Prajāpati's daughter Uṣas becomes interchangeable with Dyaus, whose name has now crept into the story, and the transformation into animal forms is omitted.

prajā́patir ha vái svā́ṃ duhitáram abhí dadhyau / divaṃ voṣásaṃ vā mithuny ènayā syām íti tā́ṁ sáṃ babhūva //

Prajāpati set his mind on his own daughter, either Sky or Dawn. "May I pair with her," [he wished]. He made love to her. (1:7:4:1)

The sense of the sinfulness of Prajāpati's act, which was attributed to the one about to become Paśupati-Rudra in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (4:2:12 [35, 12–13]), is here assigned to the gods. They call on the lord of cattle to punish him (1:7:4:2–3):

tád vái devā́nām ā́ga āsa / yá itthā́ṁ svā́ṃ duhitáram asmā́kaṁ svásāraṃ karotī́ti // té ha devā́ ūcuḥ / yò 'yáṃ deváḥ paśūnā́m ī́ṣṭe 'tisaṃdhā́ṃ vā́ ayáṃ carati yá itthā́ṁ svā́ṃ duhitáram asmā́kaṁ svásāraṃ karóti vídhyemā́m íti tā́ṁ rudrò 'bhyāyā́tya vivyā́dha tásya sāmí rétaḥ prá caskanda táthén nūnā́ṃ tád āsa //

That indeed was a sin for the gods: "He who acts thus towards his own daughter, our sister, [commits a sin]." [2] Those gods then said to this god who is lord of cattle: "An act of transgression he commits who acts thus towards his own daughter, our sister. Pierce him." Rudra, having aimed at [him], pierced him. In the middle [of the act], his semen spurted forth. Thus indeed it was. [3]

2.3.3 Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (3:33)

In this account, the interchangeability of the daughter's identity is explained as based on divergent opinions. While some said she was Dyaus, others said she was Uṣas: *prajāpatir vai svāṃ duhitaram abhy adhyāyad divam ity anya āhur uṣasam ity anye* (3:33:1). Here, as in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, therefore, there is an awareness of different versions of the story. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* account then follows the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*, in that Prajāpati takes the form of a buck and Dyaus or Uṣas that of a deer (3:33:1 *tām ṛśyo bhūtvā rohitaṃ bhūtām abhy ait*). As in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the gods seek to punish him for his act. Instead of calling on the one who is already 'lord of cattle' (ŚB 1:7:4:3), however, they produce a being of dreadful form who asks for this title as a boon for piercing Prajāpati. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* gods thus bestow on him that which the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*'s Prajāpati granted in fear and in vain to the one who was preparing to shoot at him. A bribe so as not to act has become advance payment for requested services (3:33:1–4):

taṃ devā apaśyann akṛtaṃ vai prajāpatiḥ karotīti te tam aichan ya enam āriṣyaty etam anyonyasmin nāvindaṁs teṣāṃ yā eva ghoratamās tanva āsaṁs tā ekadhā sam abharaṁs tāḥ sambhṛtā eṣa devo 'bhavat tad asyaitad bhūtavan nāma [1] *bhavati vai sa yo 'syaitad evaṃ nāma veda* [2] *taṃ devā abruvann ayaṃ vai prajāpatir akṛtam akar imaṃ vidhyeti sa tathety abravīt sa vai vo varaṃ vṛṇā iti vṛṇīṣveti sa etam eva varam avṛṇita paśūnām ādhipatyam tad asyaitat paśuman nāma* [3] *paśumān bhavati yo 'syaitad evaṃ nāma veda* [4]

The gods saw him (Prajāpati). "Prajāpati does what is not done."[38] They sought one who would hit him. They could not find this [god] amongst one another. Their most dreadful forms they gathered into one. Brought together, those [forms] became (*abhavat*) this god. Therefore there is this name of his (i.e., Bhūtapati) that contains [the word] *bhūta* [1]. He thrives if he thus knows this name of his [2]. To him the gods said: "Prajāpati here has done what is not done. Pierce him." "So be it," he said. "Let me choose a boon from you." "Choose," [they said]. He chose this very boon: overlordship of cattle (*paśu*). Therefore there is this name of his (i.e., Paśupati) that contains [the word] *paśu* [3]. As an owner of cattle he thrives, if he thus knows this name of his [4].

When the being (Rudra) then pierces him, Prajāpati goes flying into the air. His semen gushes out and becomes a pond.[39]

2.3.4 Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa (8:2:10)

This account is very short, omitting the reaction of the gods and Rudra's punishment of Prajāpati. Cattle are made out of Prajāpati's spilled semen so that it is not spoiled:

prajāpatir uṣasam adhy ait svāṃ duhitaraṃ tasya retaḥ parāpatat tad asyāṃ ny aṣicyata tad aśrīṇād idaṃ me mā duṣad iti tat sad akarot paśūn eva //

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[38] *Akṛtam* means 'that which has not been done,' implying 'that which should not be done.'

[39] *tam abhyāyatyāvidhyat sa viddha ūrdhva udaprapatat* ... [5] *tad vā idam prajāpater etaḥ siktam adhāvat* ...

Prajāpati went on top of his own daughter Uṣas. His semen flew away. It was poured on this one (the earth). He made it perfect, [thinking]: "Let this [semen] of mine not be spoiled." He made it [something] real, namely, cattle.

2.3.5 Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (3:262)

As the gods in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* account produced Bhūtapati/Paśupati by bringing together their most dreadful forms (3:33:1), in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* they created Rudra from what in themselves was crude. Their initial purpose for thus fashioning him out, however, was not to punish Prajāpati for his transgression, but rather to make themselves fit to perform a sacrifice by removing the crude part from within themselves. The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* story thus begins just as the gods are commencing the session:

devā vai sattram upayanto 'bruvan yan naḥ krūram ātmanas tan nir mimāmahai / mā sakrūrā upa gāmeti / tad yad eṣāṃ krūram ātmana āsīt tan nirmāya śarāvayoḥ sammārjaṃ ny adadhur / atha sattram upāyaṁs / tata eṣo 'khalo devo 'jāyata / tad yac charāvābhyām ajāyata tad asyaitan nāma / eṣa ha vāva so 'gnir jajñe / na hainam eṣa hinasti ya evaṃ veda /

Starting a sacrificial session, the gods said: "That [part] of ourselves which is crude, let us give form to [it]. Let us not start with [that which is] crude." Having given form to that [part] of themselves which was crude, they wiped it clean and placed it between two vessels, [one covering the other]. Then they started the session. Thereupon this dangerous[40] god was born. Because he was born from the two vessels (*śarāva*), that is why he has this name (i.e., *śarva*, a name of Śiva). That Agni was really born as this one. This one does not harm him (the sacrificer), if he knows thus.

When this Rudra-Agni then inquired as to why the gods had created him, they replied, leaving their initial purpose of 'self-purification' behind, that it was for supervision, so he would kill one who might transgress: *aupadraṣṭryāyety abruvan yo 'tipādayāt taṁ hanāsā iti /*. It is only then that the story of Prajāpati and his daughter—in this case Uṣas

[40] The adjective *akhala* is probably a misspelling of *aghalá* (from *aghá* n. evil), which appears in AV 8:8:10c (*mṛtyór yé aghalā́ dūtā́ḥ* "the dangerous messengers who are of death"), in ŚB 12:7:3:20 where *aghalā́ devátā* is Rudra, and four times in JB 2:266:12ff. qualifying dangerous wild animals, like the tiger (*aghalās siṁhā aghalāś śārdūlā aghalā ṛkṣā ṛkṣīkā aghalā ahayo 'jagarāḥ*). Hence it has the sense, particularly in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, of dangerous rather than evil. The 'dangerous god' in our passage is Rudra, as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* makes clear. Caland (1931, p.166, note 3), however, understands *akhala* to mean 'not-wicked,' and thus to be a euphemism like *śivá* 'the friendly one' because he is unfriendly. According to this understanding, therefore, the name Rudra is not used so as not to invoke his 'wicked' presence, for by naming, as we have seen on pp.61–62 above, that which is denoted by the name comes into existence.

and no other—is told. As in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* and the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, they take animal forms. Supervisor Rudra-Agni then recalls the purpose of his existence and pierces Prajāpati:

prajāpatir hoṣasaṁ svāṃ duhitaram abhy adhyāyat / sāsmai rohid bhūtvātiṣṭhat / tāṃ pṛṣato bhūtvāskandat / sa aikṣatāsmai vai māṃ devā ajījanann aupadraṣṭryāya / ati vā ayaṃ pādayati hantainaṃ vidhyānīti / tam avidhyat / sa viddha etad rūpaṃ pratyasyordhvod akrāmat //

Prajāpati set his mind on Uṣas, his own daughter. She, having become a deer, stood still for him. He, having become a buck, jumped on her. He (Rudra-Agni) reflected: "For this have the gods produced me, for supervision. This one (Prajāpati) transgresses. Let me pierce him." He pierced him. Pierced, he threw off this [buck] appearance and rose upwards.

2.3.6 Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa (6:1:1–12)

The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* account has a different twist on the story. Here the issue of Prajāpati's incest is avoided altogether by passing the incest on, so to speak, to his offspring. It is not entirely transferred, however, because although they are aroused by their sister Uṣas, they never actually commit incest with her, as Prajāpati did with his daughter.

prajāpatiḥ prajātikāmas tapo 'tapyata / tasmāt taptāt pañcājāyanta / agnir vāyur ādityaś candramā uṣāḥ pañcamī / tān abravīd yūyam api tapyadhvam iti / te 'dīkṣanta / tān dīkṣitāṁs tepānān uṣāḥ prājāpatyāpsarorūpaṃ kṛtvā purastāt pratyud ait / tasyām eṣāṃ manaḥ sam apatat / te reto 'siñcanta / te prajāpatiṃ pitaram etyābruvan / reto vā asicāmahai[41] *tan no māmuyā bhūd iti / sa prajāpatir hiraṇmayaṃ camasam akarot ... tasmin retaḥ sam asiñcat /*

Prajāpati, desiring offspring, heated himself. From him being heated, five [beings] were born: Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, Candramas, and Uṣas as fifth. He said to them: "You also, heat yourselves." They consecrated themselves. Facing them being consecrated, [i.e.,] having heated themselves, Prajāpati's daughter Uṣas rose up in the east, having taken the form of an Apsaras. Their mind fell in [love] with her all at once (*sam*). They spilled their semen. They came to Prajāpati their father and said: "We have spilled our semen. Let this [semen] of us not become in that [bad] way."[42] Prajāpati made a golden cup ... into that he poured it (the semen of Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, and Candramas) together.

[41] The hybrid form *asicāmahai*, beginning as a root-aorist but ending as a subjunctive, cannot be correct. As Keith (1920, p.377, note 2) points out, it should be the aorist *asicāmahi*.

[42] The *amuyā bhū* 'become in that way' is identical with *pāpáyā amuyā́ bhū* 'become in that bad way,' which occurs less frequently. In the *Ṛg Veda*, *amuyā́* occurs on its own four times (1:32:8a; 4:18:1d; 5:34:5c; 10:89:14d) and three times with *pāpáyā* (*pāpáyāmuyā́*) (1:29:5b; 10:85:30b; 10:135:2b).

Thus there is a shift away from any blameworthy action on the part of the creator. The incestuous union of the father with his daughter does persist in the Purāṇas, and Prajāpati's coupling with either Vāc, Uṣas, or Dyaus forms the basis for the Puranic Brahmā-Sarasvatī relationship, where Prajāpati-turned-Brahmā falls in love with his daughter Sarasvatī and takes her for his consort. Concern about the impropriety of incest, however, remains an issue, and it is addressed, rather at length, as we shall see, in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (4:1–11).[43]

3. Barter for Soma

The Brāhmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇa passages of the *Yajur Veda* Saṃhitās include seven accounts of a myth wherein Soma is stolen by the Gandharva Viśvāvasu, and then bought back by the gods by means of Vāc:

1) *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (3:7:3 [77, 14ff.])
2) *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* (24:1 [90, 3ff.])
3) *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* (37:2 [227, 16ff.])
4) *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (6:1:6:5–6)
5) *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (1:27:1)
6) *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (3:2:4:1–7)
7) *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa* (Caland 1927, p.158 [repr. 1990, p.458])[44]

This myth presents a number of interesting points,[45] two of which I would like to focus on here: the appearance of Vāc in the form of a woman or a girl and the first signs of her connection with music. These two aspects, furthermore, extend their impact onto Sarasvatī, with whom Vāc, as we

[43] See p.121 below. The Puranic account that most closely follows the Brāhmaṇas is found in the *Brahma Purāṇa* (102:2cd–8ab), where the transformation into animal forms is maintained.

[44] A critical edition of the basic texts (Brāhmaṇa or Anvākhyāna, Śrauta Sūtra, and Gṛhya Sūtra) of the Vādhūla school is being prepared by Ikari Yasuke 井狩弥介, Professor Emeritus of the Kyōto Daigaku Jinbunkagaku Kenkyūjo 京都大学人文科学研究所 (Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University). In collaboration with Professor Michael Witzel, he is also preparing an annotated translation of the entire *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa*. As far as the story of the Barter for Soma is concerned, Professor Ikari's working critical edition of it (4:29), which he most kindly showed me, is largely the same as Caland's.

[45] Kuiper (1979, pp.237–41, note 464 on p.237) finds the mythological prototype for the *nāyikā* (heroine) of Sanskrit drama in the old Vedic pattern of gods and demons wooing a divine maiden, and in this connection refers to the myth under discussion, wherein, as we shall see, the Devas and Gandharvas vie for Vāc.

have seen, is identified already in the Saṃhitās and then repeatedly in the Brāhmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇa passages of the Saṃhitās,[46] where this myth occurs. Hence the appearance of the *vīṇā* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* version of the story could hardly have been without significance for the subsequent *vīṇā*-bearing Sarasvatī.

I will discuss here the seven Brāhmaṇa accounts of the Barter for Soma and conclude with a description of the myth in the *Brahma Purāṇa* (105:1–18) derived from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version.

3.1 Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (3:7:3 [77, 14ff.])

As the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* recounts, the Gandharva Viśvāvasu stole Soma from Gāyatrī and kept it for three nights (3:7:3 [77, 14–15]). The gods then said [77, 16–17]:

> *strī́kāmā vái gandharvā́ vā́cam evá sambhṛ́tya yáthā yoṣid anapakṣeyátameva táyā niṣ krīṇāméti*
>
> The Gandharvas desire women. Having prepared Speech—as a young woman of undiminishing youth [would be, so she was prepared]—with her let us barter him out.[47]

And so it was that Vāc was exchanged for Soma. The gods, however, were not satisfied, it would seem, for they then decided to contest (*ánvṛtīyāmahā íti*) the trade.[48] This was the birth of untruth (*tád ánṛtasya jánma*), for, as Ingrid Kühn points out,[49] the gods' contestation of a legitimate barter was illegitimate. "Let us invoke (her) separately," they said, suggesting a competitive invocation.[50] And thus a wooing match

[46] See p.57 above.

[47] Speech is likened to a woman already in the *Ṛg Veda* (10:71:4cd): *utá tvaḥ páśyan ná dadarśa vā́cam utá tvaḥ śṛṇván ná śṛṇoty enām / utó tvasmai tanvàṃ ví sasre jāyéva pátya uśatī́ suvā́sāḥ //* "Someone, though watching, has not seen Speech. Someone, though listening, does not hear her. But to some [other] one she has opened [her] body, as a desiring wife, beautifully attired, [would open herself] to her husband."

[48] According to Ingrid Kühn (1970, pp.91–93), who discusses the forms of *ánu-ṛtīyāmahai* (MS 3:7:3 [78, 1]) and *ánu-ārtiyanta* (MS 3:7:3 [78, 1]; KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 9]; KapS 37:2 [228, 3]) in the context of our myth, the meaning is that after (*ánu*) the legitimate barter of Vāc for Soma, the gods contested it.

[49] Kühn 1970, p.92.

[50] Although it would seem to be the gods who say this to the Gandharvas (*tè 'bruvan víhvayāmahā íti*), in the KāṭhS (24:1 [90, 9–10]) and the KapS (37:2 [228, 4]) it is the Gandharvas who suggest this: *té gandharvā́ abruvan víhvayāmahā íti*. On competitive invocation (*vihavá*), see Kuiper 1979, p.103.

between the Gandharvas and the gods ensued: the gods invoked her with song (*gắthāṃ devắ ágāyan*),[51] while the Gandharvas uttered a charm (*bráhma gandharvắ avadan*). She then turned to the gods (*sắ devắn upắvartata*).

A reading of *bráhman* as truth formulation[52] would suggest that Vāc chose music over the Vedas—entertainment over knowledge—which is precisely the understanding of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (3:2:4:5–6).[53] The Gandharvas, however, are not known to have any particular connection with, or knowledge of, the Vedas.[54] They do not, furthermore, 'recite' (*śaṁs*), as would be appropriate for a hymn or a prayer, but they 'utter' or 'pronounce' (*vad*). On the other hand, one might argue, Vāc represents all forms of knowledge (ŚB 14:5:4:11) and embodies the Vedas in particular (ŚB 6:5:3:4), and thus the proclamation (if not recitation) of the Vedas would be a logical choice in competing for the goddess of knowledge. Her function in this myth, however, is not in the form of goddess of knowledge, but rather as a woman: the Gandharvas are not said to desire knowledge, wherefore Speech as goddess of knowledge would be sent to them; they are said to desire women,[55] and thus Vāc in the form of a 'young woman of undiminishing youth,' much like an Apsaras, the usual spouse of a Gandharva,[56] is exchanged for Soma. Consequently it is a woman whom the gods and the Gandharvas vie for, and the means they resort to in order to win her over are chosen accordingly. As a man might use a line, speak some 'magical' or captivating words to catch a woman's attention, recite poetry or serenade her to win her heart, the Gandharvas resort to a charm and the gods to a song. The

[51] On the Vedic *gāthā* see Horsch 1966; Gonda 1975, pp.405–06.

[52] See Thieme 1952, pp.118–19 [repr. 1971, pp.127–28]. Although Thieme does not discuss this *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* passage, he does take up the parallel *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* lines (6:1:6:6) in note 3 of p.119 [repr. p.128], interpreting *bráhman* as truth formulation, either in the sense of mystical truths or as the threefold (*ṛc*, *sāman*, *yajus*) knowledge, in light of ŚB 3:2:4:5 (*védān evá prócire*). *Bráhman* in the sense of incantation, spell, or charm is prevalent in the *Atharva Veda*, as in 4:37:11, for instance.

[53] See pp.78–79 below.

[54] Kühn (1970, p.92) believes the gods use a trick in choosing to sing, for song is the domain of the Gandharvas. By the time of the *Mahābhārata*, the Gandharvas are indeed musicians (see Hopkins 1915, p.154), but this does not seem to have been the case in Vedic texts. At most, the *Atharva Veda* (4:37:7ab) mentions the 'dancing' Gandharva: *ānṛ́tyataḥ ... gandharvásya ...*

[55] Cf. AV 4:37:11d *gandharváḥ sacate stríyaḥ //*.

[56] AV 2:2:5cd *tā́bhyo gandharvápatnībhyo 'psarā́bhyo 'karaṃ námaḥ //*; 4:37:7b *gandharvásyāpsarāpatéḥ /*.

use of magic spells to win a woman's love was not uncommon, as evidenced in the *Atharva Veda* (2:30; 3:25; 6:8–9, 82, 102, 139).[57]

Hence the consequences of her choice are then explained in terms of what a woman loves: since, just like Vāc, a woman is drawn to the one who sings, the groom is therefore required to sing during the wedding ceremony (MS 3:7:3 [78, 4–6]):

> *tásmāt vivāhé gắthā gīyate tásmāt gắyant striyắḥ priyás tád yá evám vidvắn gắthāṃ gắyan hástaṃ gṛhṇắti sáṁ hi jī́ryataḥ sárvam ắyur ito nắrtiṃ nītas*
>
> Therefore a song is sung at a wedding. Therefore the one who sings is dear to a woman. That is why one knowing thus, singing a song, marries. Then the two (the married couple) age together. They live their whole lifespan. They do not get into difficulty.

As for the Soma barter, the text concludes (MS 3:7:3 [78, 6–7]):

> *tád āhur ắ vái sắ púnar agachan náivá kíṃ caná somakráyaṇī́ti //*
>
> About that [Soma barter] they say: "She (Vāc) did come back. There is no female with whom one barters for Soma."

The gods were indeed clever in invoking her with song, for in this way, she was only temporarily exchanged for Soma. It should be noted here that a woman's love of music, or the conception of the author(s) that all women love music, is not under judgement—much less under criticism—in this passage. It is particularly appropriate to Vāc as speech, for speech is meaningful sound, which in song is set to music.

3.2 Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā (24:1 [90, 3ff.]) *and* Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā (37:2 [227, 16ff.])

The *Kāṭhaka* and the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* accounts are almost identical, other than a line not included in the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* and a passage of the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* corrected by Raghu Vira in his edition of the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* in accordance with his reading of the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā*. When the gods asked the Gandharvas to return Soma to them, the Gandharvas refused. The gods then considered bartering him back with a cow, but ultimately decided to send a woman, for the Gandharvas desire women. "Having made Speech a woman, let

[57] Likewise charms were used to win a man (AV 2:36; 6:60, 89, 130–32).

us release magic [with that woman]," they said (*vācaṃ striyaṃ kṛtvā māyām upāvāsṛjāmeti*).[58] Having done so, they then claimed Vāc back: "Soma is ours. She with whom one barters for Soma is ours" (*asmākaṃ somo 'smākaṃ somakrayaṇīti*).[59] The Gandharvas suggested a wooing competition, and Vāc chose the singing gods over the charm-pronouncing Gandharvas. It was then concluded (KapS 37:2 [228, 6–8] ≅ KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 11–13]):

> *tasmād gāyantaṁ strī kāmayate na brahma vadantam / adruhyad dhi sā brahmaṇe / tasmād āhur akrītaḥ somo na somakrayaṇy asti / devān hi sā punar upāvartateti /*
>
> Therefore a woman desires one who sings, not one who pronounces a charm, for she (Vāc) betrayed the charm. Therefore, they say: "Soma is not bartered for. There is no female with whom one barters for Soma because she returned to the gods."

Unlike in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*, nothing is said in the *Kāṭhaka* and the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* about weddings and the life awaiting a man who sings. As if in abbreviated form, it is simply stated that a woman desires one who sings. On the other hand, the failure of the charm is noted, since Speech 'betrayed' the Gandharvas' spell, whose magic words were supposed to work. By not allowing the charm to have its intended effect on her, she rendered it powerless. The final conclusion matches that of the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*: Vāc was never really bartered away for Soma. The bartering was an illusion, a kind of magic (*māyā*) released by the gods upon having made Vāc a woman (KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 7–8]; KapS 37:2 [228, 1–2]). As a result, this magic of the gods proved to be more powerful than the charms of the Gandharvas.

3.3 Taittirīya Saṃhitā (6:1:6:5–6)

In the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, the gods made Vāc into 'a one-year-old female' (*strī́ ékahāyanī*). Once bartered for Soma, she took the form of a deer and ran away from the Gandharvas (*sá rohíd rūpáṃ kṛtvā gandharvébhyaḥ* [5] *apakrámya*). She did not, however, return to the gods: she simply stood there (*atiṣṭhat*)—between the gods and the Gandharvas, it would

[58] KapS 37:2 [228, 1]. Schroeder's edition of the *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* does not include this line. The action itself, however, is mentioned in both texts: (*te* in KapS) *vācaṃ striyaṃ kṛtvā māyām upāvāsṛjan* (KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 7–8] = KapS 37:2 [228, 1–2]).

[59] KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 9] = KapS 37:2 [228, 3–4].

seem. This time upon the suggestion of the gods (*té devā́ abruvan*), the two camps competed in summoning her. She chose the singing gods.

> *bráhma gandharvā́ ávadann ágāyan deváḥ sā́ devā́n gā́yata upā́vartata tásmād gā́yantaṁ stríyaḥ kāmayante kā́mukā enaṁ stríyo bhavanti yá eváṃ véda*
>
> The Gandharvas uttered a charm. The gods sang. She turned to the singing gods. Therefore women desire one who sings. Women are sure to[60] desire him who knows thus (6:1:6:6).

3.4 Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (1:27:1)

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* account is unlike any of the others, in that Vāc appears as goddess of knowledge. She is the controlling hand at the center of all activity: it is she who knows what to do when the gods and the seers consider how they might have Soma come to them, it is she who reassures them of her return when they resist bartering her away, and it is she who is then seemingly exchanged for Soma.

> *somo vai rājā gandharveśv āsīt taṃ devāś ca ṛṣayaś cābhyadhyāyan katham ayam asmān somo rājā gacched iti sā vāg abravīt strīkāmā vai gandharvā mayaiva striyā bhūtayā paṇadhvam iti neti devā abruvan kathaṃ vayaṃ tvad ṛte syāmeti sābravīt krīṇītaiva yarhi vāva vo mayārtho bhavitā tarhy eva vo 'ham punar āgantāsmīti tatheti tayā mahānagnyā bhūtayā somaṁ rājānam akrīṇan //*
>
> King Soma was amidst the Gandharvas. The gods and the seers set their minds on him: "How might this king Soma come to us?" She, (i.e.,) Vāc, said: "The Gandharvas desire women. With me as a woman, barter [for Soma]." "No," said the gods. "How could we be without you?" She said: "Do barter. As soon as your aim will be [attained] through me, I will come back to you." "So be it." With her as a *mahānagnī*, they bartered for king Soma.

The gods bartered, knowing there was no actual barter, for, as Vāc had assured them, as soon as they would have Soma, she would return to them. While in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* she was given the form of a young woman of undiminishing youth (*yoṣíd anapakṣeyátamā*), in the *Kāṭhaka* and the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* the shape of a woman (*strī́*), and in

[60] For the possible shades of meaning connected with the suffix *-uka-*, see Delbrück 1968, p.182, §123.

the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* the body of a one-year-old female (*strī́ ékahāyanī*), in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* she herself took the form of a *mahānagnī*.[61] Keith translates this term literally as 'great naked one,'[62] which might suggest a goddess, for she is called 'great,' appearing in naked form. This fits the context, in that Vāc is indeed a goddess, around whom, as noted above, all activity revolves in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* account. She may not, however, be naked, for a *nagnikā*, as Thieme explains,[63] is a girl just before puberty. She is naked only in the sense that she does not yet have pubic hair. This would be more in line with the form Vāc is given in the other accounts, in most of which her youth or infancy is stressed.[64] A *mahānagnī*, therefore, may be a pre-pubescent goddess.

3.5 Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (3:2:4:1–7)

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the gods sent Vāc to the Gandharvas, knowing that she would return to them together with Soma (3:2:4:3):

> *té hocuḥ / yoṣítkāmā vái gandharvā́ vā́cam evàibhyaḥ práhiṇavāma sā́ naḥ sahá sómenā́gamiṣyatī́ti tébhyo vā́caṃ prā́hiṇvant sàinānt sahá sómenā́gacchat //*
>
> They said: "The Gandharvas desire young women. Let us send Vāc to them. She will come [back] to us with Soma." They sent Vāc to them. She came [back] to them with Soma.

The Gandharvas, however, pursued her, saying to the gods: "Soma is yours, but Speech is ours" (3:2:4:4 *sómo yuṣmā́kaṃ vā́g evā̀smā́kam íti*), presumably understanding that Vāc had been bartered for Soma. The clever gods agreed, but added a condition: "So be it," said the gods, "but, since she has come here, do not lead her [away] forcibly, as it were. Let us invoke her separately" (*táthéti devā́ abruvann ihò céd ā̀gān màinām abhīṣáheva naiṣṭa víhvayāmahā íti*). As in the other accounts, a wooing competition then ensued. In this case, however, the gods not only sang, but also played a musical instrument (3:2:4:5–6):

[61] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (3:2:4:3), as we shall see, she is given the form of a young woman (*yoṣít*).

[62] Keith 1920 [repr. 1971], p.128.

[63] Thieme 1963, p.178 [repr. 1971, p.443].

[64] *Strī́* in the *Kāṭhaka* and the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā* is not necessarily a fully grown woman. It may simply denote the feminine gender, as in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, where a 'one-year-old woman' would be a contradiction in terms.

> *tásyai gandharvā́ḥ / védān evá prócira íti vái vayáṃ vidméti vayáṃ vidméti // átha devā́ḥ / vī́ṇām evá sṛṣṭvā́ vādáyanto nigā́yanto níṣedur íti vái te vayáṃ gāsyā́ma íti tvā prámodayiṣyāmaha íti ...*
>
> For her, the Gandharvas proclaimed the Vedas, [saying every time] "... Thus we know!" "... Thus we know!" [5] Then the gods produced a *vīṇā* and sat down playing [it] and singing [to the sound of it]. "... Thus we will sing for you." "... Thus we will amuse you," [they said every time].

Here the charm (*bráhman*) is understood to be truth formulation in the form of the Vedas, and thus it is not simply a woman whom the Gandharvas address, but it is the goddess of knowledge whom they seek to impress. As elsewhere, the gods sing, but they are now accompanied by the *vīṇā*. This marks the very first mention of the *vīṇā* in association with Vāc, for whose enjoyment it is and will continue to be played. She will choose to remain with the gods, and thus also with the *vīṇā*. This connection is particularly significant, for the *vīṇā* will become Sarasvatī's supreme emblem, dominant amongst her attributes, and thus represented in so many of her images.

In this wooing competition, knowledge and music are vividly set against one another. Following the recitation of each hymn or passage, the Gandharvas repeat that they know (the Vedas), and after each song the gods assure Vāc that they will continue to sing for her and thus to amuse her. Emphasis on the contrast between knowledge and music paves the way for a rather critical assessment of Vāc's choice. Whereas the remarks of the *Maitrāyaṇī*, the *Kāṭhaka*, the *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha*, and the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* appear in the form of generalizations on what women desire (and thus the challenges faced by a man!), those of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* proceed to label as *mógha* the things to which Vāc and consequently all women are drawn (3:2:4:6):

> *sā́ devā́n upā́vavarta sā́ vái sā́ tán mógham upā́vavarta yā́ stuvádbhyaḥ śáṁsadbhyo nṛttáṃ gītám upāvavárta tásmād ápy etárhi móghasaṁhitā evá yóṣā eváṁ hí vā́g upā́vavarta tā́m u hy ànyā́ ánu yóṣās tásmād yá evá nṛ́tyati yó gā́yati tásminn evàitā́ nímiślatamā iva //*
>
> She turned to the gods. She who turned away from those who praised and recited, to dance and song, turned to something deceptive. Therefore even now women are connected with deceptive things, for Speech thus turned to [the gods], and because other women [follow] after her. Therefore it is to him who dances, him who sings, that these (women of the day) are rather closely attached.

Although nothing was said about dance prior to this, it is now added to singing. Vāc turned to these deceptive things (*mógha*) that lead astray

(*mohayanti*). She as a woman chose the singing gods, being drawn to what is deceptive, and her choice then determined the nature of all women, for they only follow in her footsteps.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* portrays Vāc in a twofold form representing polar opposites: as goddess of knowledge she is all-knowing, and yet in the form of a woman she is connected with deceptive things, and hence with delusion and ignorance. This polar tension is particularly evident in the wooing competition. Although what the Gandharvas actually seek is Vāc as a woman, with their proclamation of the Vedas they address the goddess of knowledge. On the other hand, while the real aim of the gods is Speech as goddess of knowledge, with their *vīṇā* and song they pursue a deception-drawn, music-loving woman. Accordingly, they each aspire to their desired object in a roundabout way. The gods, however, are more clever, for they address her in a method appropriate to her form at that given time. They made her a woman, and thus they appeal to her as a woman.

3.6 Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa
(Caland 1927, p.158 [repr. 1990, p.458])

The *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa*, which belongs to the Taittirīya Śākhā, contains an account of the Barter for Soma consisting in a word-for-word repetition of *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 6:1:6:6 treated above,[65] with the insertion of four stanzas: two of the stanzas are identified as the *bráhman* that the Gandharvas pronounce, and the other two, as the *gā́thā* sung by the gods.

> *brahma gandharvā avadann agāyan devā ye ha pūrve janā āsur iti brahma gandharvā avadan yebhyaḥ pūrvavaho hitam / śīrṣaṇvāṁs tebhyo gandharvaḥ purā*[66] *devebhyaḥ ātapat // ye ha pūrve janā āsuḥ pūrve pūrvatarebhyaḥ / mūrdhanvāṁs tebhyaḥ saubhruvaḥ purā*[67] *sūryād utātapad iti yā strīṇāṃ prathamā varyetīti gāthāṃ devā agāyan yasyāṃ viśvam idaṃ jagat / tāṃ adya gāthāṃ gāsyāmi yā strīṇāṃ uttamam yaśaḥ // sarasvati predam ava subhage vājinīvati / tāṃ tvā viśvasya bhūtasya pragāyāmasy agrata iti sā devān gāyata upāvartata ta[smād gāyantaṁ striyaḥ kāmayante kāmukā enaṁ striyo]*[68] *bhavanti ya evaṃ veda*

> The Gandharvas uttered a *brahman*. The gods sang [a *gāthā*].
> "Those people who existed previously," the Gandharvas uttered, "[and] those who were conveying benefit previously to them, for [all of] them, the Gandharva with the head, heated [it] before the gods. Those people who existed previously [and] those previous to the more previous, for [all of] them, the son of Subhrū with the head, heated [it] also before the Sun."
> "The *gāthā* that is the first and the choice one of women," the gods sang a *gāthā*, "in which this whole world [exists], which is the highest glory of women, that (*gāthā*) I will sing today. Further this, O Sarasvatī, fortunate one, rich in prizes. As such we will sing (praise) you at the beginning, before every being."
> She turned to the singing gods. There[fore women desire one who sings. Women are sure to desire] him who knows thus.

As Caland points out,[69] these stanzas appear in a different sequence and with variants within one and the same wedding song found in the *Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra* (25:23). The two stanzas uttered by the Gandharvas, which are almost identical to one another, are variations on the third stanza of the wedding song, while the *gā́thā* of the gods consists of the second stanza followed by the first stanza, with minor variations. The fact that these stanzas appear in a wedding song is entirely in line with the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* version, which refers quite specifically to marriage (3:7:3 [78, 4–6]), and with most of the other accounts, which identify the kind of man women desire (KāṭhS 24:1 [90, 11]; KapS 37:2 [228, 6]; TS 6:1:6:6; ŚB 3:2:4:6).

Another point of interest in the stanzas of the *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa* account is the appearance of Sarasvatī, whom the gods invoke in the second stanza of their *gā́thā*. The epithets she is given here are commonly attributed to her in the *Ṛg Veda*: Sarasvatī is called *subhágā* in RV 1:89:3d, 7:95:4b, 6b, and 8:21:17b; and *vājínīvatī* in RV 1:3:10b, 2:41:18b, 6:61:3d, 4b, and 7:96:3b. Although the well-established identification of Sarasvatī and Vāc in the Brāhmaṇas renders the invocation of Sarasvatī here natural, the use of Sarasvatī's *Ṛg Veda* epithets makes her presence overshadow that of Vāc.

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[65] See p.77 above.

[66] Caland has *puro*, but probably it is *purā* as in the following stanza. This is confirmed by three of the manuscripts used by Ikari (see note 44 above), and it is, therefore, the reading he adopts for his critical edition.

[67] Although both Caland and Ikari have *pūrā*, this seems to be a scribal error under the influence of the *pū* of *pūrva* occurring repeatedly in these two stanzas. As in the first stanza, it should read *purā*.

[68] The square brackets are mine, indicating the abbreviated part supplied by Caland from the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*. As Ikari's edition shows, the manuscript actually reads *ta = bhavati*.

[69] Caland 1929.

3.7 Brahma Purāṇa (105:1–18)

The *Brahma Purāṇa* includes an account of this myth based on the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version. Here, as connecting threads are tied together and further mythological links are incorporated, the name Sarasvatī is sometimes used instead of Vāc, the narrator is her father-spouse Brahmā, and the story is related as an incident which took place at Soma Tīrtha (105:1):

brahmovāca
somatīrtham iti khyātaṃ pitṝṇāṃ prītivardhanam /
tatra vṛttaṃ mahāpuṇyaṃ śṛṇu yatnena nārada //

Brahmā said:
[There is a place] known as Soma Tīrtha, which increases the joy of the Fathers.
Listen attentively to the very holy incident [that occurred] there, O Nārada.

The story, now localized, is related by the creator with added colour and detail. When the gods were distressed as to how they might regain Soma, they approached Brahmā and were answered by Vāc—his 'better half.'[70] As in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, her suggestion that she should be exchanged for Soma, since women are dear to the Gandharvas, was met with opposition. The gods argued that they could remain neither without Soma, nor without Vāc: *vinā tenāpi na sthātuṃ śakyaṃ naiva tvayā vinā //* (105:5cd). She assured them of her return (105:6b *punar eṣyāmy ahaṃ tv iha /*) and told them to prepare a sacrifice on the banks of the Gautamī river, where she could be exchanged for Soma (105:7–8ab).[71] Invitations were issued, and gods, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, seers, and others assembled on a mountain, which thus came to be called Devagiri (105:9–11ab).[72] While the seers were performing the sacrifice on the banks of the Gautamī, Indra, surrounded by the gods, suggested to the Gandharvas to barter Soma for Sarasvatī (105:11cd–13).[73] Although Soma and

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70 Brahmā made Sarasvatī from half of his body, as the *Matsya Purāṇa* (3:30–32) recounts. See p.119 below.

71 *gautamyā dakṣiṇe tīre bhaved devāgamo yadi / mukhaṃ tu viṣayaṃ kṛtvā āyān tu surasattamāḥ // gandharvāḥ strīpriyā nityaṃ paṇadhvaṃ taṃ mayā saha /.*

72 *devadūtaiḥ pṛthag devān yakṣān gandharvapannagān/ āhvānaṃ cakrire tatra puṇye devagirau tadā // tato devagirir nāma parvatasyābhavan mune / tatrāgaman suragaṇā gandharvā yakṣakiṃnarāḥ // devāḥ siddhāś ca ṛṣayas tathāṣṭau devayonayaḥ /.*

73 *ṛṣibhir gautamītīre kriyamāṇe mahādhvare // tatra devaiḥ parivṛtaḥ sasrākṣo 'bhyabhāṣata // indra uvāca / gandharvān atha saṃpūjya sarasvatyāḥ samīpataḥ / sarasvatyā paṇadhvaṃ no yuṣmākam amṛtātmanā //.* 105:13ab seems to have been inserted, for it is not part of Indra's speech. In terms of sequence, his worship of the Gandharvas in the presence of Sarasvatī should have occurred prior to speaking, and

Sarasvatī were exchanged and thus Sarasvatī belonged to the Gandharvas, she remained near the gods, coming to them in secret (105:15–16ab):

somo 'bhavac cāmarāṇāṃ gandharvāṇāṃ sarasvatī /
avasat tatra vāgīśā tathāpi ca surāntike //
āyāti ca raho nityam upāṃśu kriyatām iti /

And Soma belonged to the immortals (gods), Sarasvatī to the Gandharvas.
[Although] the goddess of speech dwelt there, even so she also [dwelt] near the gods.
And she always used to come secretly. "Let it (the barter for Soma) be done silently."

If, despite Sarasvatī's secret visits to the gods, it should happen to look like a barter actually took place in this version of the myth, Brahmā makes it quite clear that it was not the case (105:17cd–18ab): "Then Soma belonged to the gods, and Sarasvatī also [belonged to them]. The Gandharvas had neither Soma nor Sarasvatī" (*tato 'bhavad devatānāṃ somaś cāpi sarasvatī // gandharvāṇāṃ naiva somo naivāsīc ca sarasvatī /*). The gods were the winners, and the Gandharvas were the losers. We are not told in what specific form Sarasvatī was apparently bartered away, but clearly it was as a woman. Perhaps the bard(s) of the *Brahma Purāṇa* account interpreted the *mahāṇagnī* of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* literally and considered this form entirely inappropriate for the pure Sarasvatī. Furthermore, as in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the wooing competition is left out, and thus also the concluding remarks on Vāc's choice. Right from the outset, she had confronted the opposition of the gods by assuring them of her return. While in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* Vāc promised to come back as soon as they had obtained Soma, in the *Brahma Purāṇa* she fulfilled her promise by coming to them secretly. Although the gods are supposed to be the outright winners, in possession of both Soma and Vāc, in the *Brahma Purāṇa* their command of Sarasvatī is hardly complete, given that she is openly with the Gandharvas and secretly with them. The gods in the Brāhmaṇa accounts appear to have fared somewhat better.

The two points of particular interest in the myth of the Barter for Soma—the appearance of Vāc in the form of a woman or a girl and the first signs of her connection with music in general and the *vīṇā* in particular—on which I have focused here take on a materialized shape in Sarasvatī images. Having appropriated the *vīṇā*, the goddess of knowledge is represented as a beautiful woman playing upon it. It is notewor-

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yet his speech is already introduced in 105:12d (*abhyabhāṣata*).

thy that both the feminine form and the connection with music initially arise in less than optimal circumstances: the female body is imposed upon Vāc so that she may be bartered away, a song is sung for her so that she as a woman may be lured back, and in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *vīṇā* and song to which she turns are deceptive things with which she forges a link and sets the standard for all women to follow. In order to complete the illusion of the barter, the false appearance of the female form intended to lead the Gandharvas astray is herself subject to delusion. The beautiful Sarasvatī with her *vīṇā* thus finds some of her roots in the muddy environment of deception by way of illusion, but like the lotus, she continues to grow and bloom, long after the origins of her beauty and music are entirely forgotten.

4. River Sarasvatī

4.1 *Sacrificial Sessions along the Sarasvatī*

Despite the Brāhmaṇas' overwhelming emphasis on Sarasvatī's identity with Vāc, she as a river is far from obliterated. The Brāhmaṇas continue to proclaim the sacredness of her waters and the auspiciousness of performing sacrifices on her banks. As we have seen, already in the *Ṛg Veda* (3:23:4) the Sarasvatī had been identified as amongst the best places on earth to establish one's sacred fire. The river Sarasvatī is the path the gods drive along (*devayā́naḥ pánthāḥ*), says the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (7:2:1:4).[74] Therefore they who perform a sacrifice lasting six nights to reach heaven (TS 7:2:1:1 *ṣaḍrātrá*) move along the Sarasvatī. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (25:10)[75] describes sacrificial sessions (*sattra*) to be carried out at various stages along the river, from the place where it disappears in the sands, Vinaśana, to its source, Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa (25:10:16):

> *catuścatvāriṁśad āśvīnāni sarasvatyā vinaśanāt plakṣaḥ prāsravaṇas tāvad itaḥ svargo lokaḥ sarasvatīsammitenādhvanā svargaṃ lokaṃ yanti*
>
> Forty days on horseback from the place where the Sarasvatī disappears (Vinaśana) [is] the "fig tree of the flowing forth [of the Sarasvatī]" (Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa). That far from here is the heavenly world. They go to the heavenly world by a way commensurate with the Sarasvatī.[76]

[74] TS 7:2:1:4 *sárasvatyā yānty eṣá vái devayā́naḥ pánthās tám evā́nu ā́ rohanti* ... "They drive along the Sarasvatī. This is the path the gods drive along; it is along that (path) that they (those who perform this sacrifice) ascend [to heaven]."

[75] Cf. *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* 2:297–99.

The sacredness of the river in the eyes of her worshippers, therefore, is beyond doubt.

The rise of a new mythology of the Kurukṣetra region, wherein flows the Sarasvatī, is connected with the process of the formation of the Kuru state during the early post-Ṛg-Vedic period, as Witzel argues.[77] The Sarasvatī river, which, according to Witzel, as we have seen,[78] personifies the Milky Way, falls down to this world at Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa, "the world tree at the center of heaven and earth," and flows through the land of the Kurus, the center of this world.[79] Witzel traces this conception of Kurukṣetra, and specifically of the Sarasvatī running through it, back to *Ṛg Veda* 3:53:11, where the Bhārata king Sudās settles on the Sarasvatī, identifying her as *vara ā pṛthivyāḥ* 'the earth's choicest [place],'[80] i.e., the center of the world. If the best place on earth to establish one's sacred fire is on the Sarasvatī, one step beyond that is the development of the practice of *yātsattra* (mobile *sattra*) along the river. The ritual sessions performed on Sarasvatī's banks represent "la voie des dieux, des *ṛṣi* et des âmes dans le ciel, vers ce 'monde brilliant' [*svargá loká*], visible dans le ciel nocturne."[81]

The Sarasvatī *yātsattra* accounts also mention cases in which to end the performance, including when there is tenfold increase in cattle (TS 7:2:1:4; PB 25:10:19; JB 2:299). On the basis of these instances, Shingo Einoo suggests that the mobile sacrificial sessions along the Sarasvatī were performed for the express purpose of increasing cattle and interprets them as 'a ritualization of cattle rearing.'[82]

4.2 *Kavaṣa Ailūṣa*

4.2.1 Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (2:19)

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* recounts how seers were performing a *sattra* on the Sarasvatī. Thinking that a certain Kavaṣa Ailūṣa was "the son of a slave

[76] The rituals to be carried out at the various stages along the river are explained in the Śrauta Sūtras (fifth to the second century B.C.E.). See *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 13:29; *Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 10:15.

[77] Witzel 1995, p.16.

[78] See p.13 above.

[79] Witzel 1995, p.16.

[80] Cf. RV 3:23:4 cited on p.14 above.

[81] Witzel 1984, p.232.

[82] Einoo 2001, pp.615, 617.

woman, a gambler, a non-Brahman" (*dāsyāḥ putraḥ kitavo 'brāhmaṇaḥ*), they drove him out into the desert, saying: "Let thirst strike him there. Let him not drink the water of the Sarasvatī" (*atrainam pipāsā hantu sarasvatyā udakaṃ mā pād iti*). As he was in the desert, afflicted by thirst, he saw the Aponaptrīya ('child of the Waters') hymn (RV 10:30): "Forth among the gods, let there be speeding for the *bráhman*" (*prá devatrā́ bráhmaṇe gātúr etu*).[83] Thereby he went to the dear abode (*priyaṃ dhāma*) of the Waters, which rose up after him, and Sarasvatī flowed all around him (2:19:1).[84] That is why they call this place Parisāraka, for this is where Sarasvatī flowed all around (*pari sasāra*) him: *tasmād dhāpy etarhi parisārakam ity ā cakṣate yad enaṁ sarasvatī samantam pari sasāra* (2:19:2). The seers then understood they had been mistaken. Recognizing that the gods knew Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, they called on him. Having performed the Aponaptrīya hymn, they too attained the dear abode of the Waters and, the text adds, of the gods (2:19:3).[85]

4.2.2 Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa (12:3:11–24)

The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* includes another version of this myth. While the Mādhyama seers were performing a *sattra* on the Sarasvatī, Kavaṣa sat down with them to eat, but they objected: "You are the son of a female slave. We will not eat with you" (*dāsyā vai tvaṃ putro 'si na vayaṃ tvayā saha bhakṣayiṣyāma iti*). Kavaṣa became angry and ran away. He recited a hymn of praise to Sarasvatī, who then followed after him: *sarasvatīm etena sūktena tuṣṭāva taṁ heyam anv iyāya*. Realizing what had happened, the surprised seers hurried to him to express their reverence: "O seer, homage be to you. Do not harm us. You indeed are the best of us, you whom this one (Sarasvatī) follows" (*ṛṣe namas te 'stu mā no hiṁsīḥ tvaṃ vai naḥ śreṣṭo 'si yaṃ tveyam anv etīti*). Thus they dispelled Kavaṣa's anger. The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* concludes that this is the greatness of Kavaṣa, and that he is the one who knows this (Aponaptrīya) hymn thoroughly: *sa eṣa kavaṣasyaiva mahimā sūktasya cānuveditā*.

[83] RV 10:30:1a.

[84] *tenāpāṃ priyaṃ dhāmopāgacchat tam āpo 'nūd āyaṁs taṁ sarasvatī samantam pary adhāvat* // On *priyaṃ dhāma*, see Bodewitz 2002.

[85] *te vā ṛṣayo 'bruvan vidur vā imaṃ devā upemaṁ hvayāmahā iti tatheti tam upāhvayanta tam upahūyaitad aponaptrīyam akurvata pra devatrā brahmaṇe gātur etv iti tenāpām priyaṃ dhāmopāgacchann upa devānām* //

VEDIC SARASVATĪ IN RETROSPECTIVE

Before proceeding to the epic Sarasvatī, let us look back at the textual sources examined so far, and summarize the conceptual development of Sarasvatī perceptible from the *Ṛg Veda* to the Brāhmaṇas.[1]

In the *Ṛg Veda*, composed sometime after 1750 B.C.E. and compiled around the twelfth century B.C.E., Sarasvatī appears as a powerful river and a mighty goddess, invoked to grant all things and to destroy enemies. She is called on in hymns that were recited during sacrifices performed on her banks, and is associated with the sacrificial goddesses Iḷā and Bhāratī. She is closely connected with inspired thought (*dhī́*), which, in turn, is inseparably tied in with speech (*vā́c*).

In the practical, this-worldly *Atharva Veda* of the twelfth century B.C.E., Sarasvatī is invoked for her assistance in matters of this world, such as marriage ceremonies and the granting of progeny. She continues to be connected with Iḷā and Bhāratī, who, together with Sarasvatī, are here called the *tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ*. One step beyond her association with inspired thought in the *Ṛg Veda*, she is linked, in the *Atharva Veda*, with speech, and even identified with it.

In the liturgical *Yajur Veda* of the twelfth to the ninth century B.C.E., coinciding in composition with the period of the establishment of the Kuru realm, Sarasvatī plays a significant part in the Sautrāmaṇī ritual, where she functions as healer and life-giver to Indra through speech. As in the *Atharva Veda*, she is both associated and identified with speech. She acquires a particular connection with the ewe, which is offered to her during the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice.

In the Brāhmaṇas of 900–500 B.C.E., the river goddess Sarasvatī reappears in decreased dimensions. Sacrificial sessions are performed along the Sarasvatī, against her course, producing a kind of Sarasvatī-river pilgrimage. The goddess is repeatedly and definitively identified with speech, the embodiment of knowledge. Speech becomes daughter and consort to the creator Prajāpati, and Prajāpati-Vāc myths then form the basis for the later Brahmā-Sarasvatī relationship. Vāc is also connected, for the first time, with music and with the *vīṇā*.

[1] See also the table, From the Vedas to the Early Purāṇas, on pp. 140–41 below.

The changes that may be recognized between the period of the composition of the *Ṛg Veda* and that of the Brāhmaṇas can be subsumed under two headings: description of the river and ritual. Textual sources, as we have seen, point to a decrease in the dimensions and the course of the river Sarasvatī. She who in the *Ṛg Veda* hymns flowed from the mountains to meet the ocean and whose flooding waters were mighty and uncontrollable, has no presence in the *Atharva* and the *Yajur Veda*, and reappears in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* as a river whose waters disappear in the sands at Vinaśana. It is important to recall, however, that these works are not geographic records bound by adherence to objectively verifiable facts. The hymns of the *Ṛg Veda* arise from religious, poetic inspiration, which often resorts to hyperbole. In invoking Sarasvatī as a mighty flood, the poet may be describing the river as it flowed in his time, he may be recalling a once great and now legendary river that has already diminished in size,[2] or he may simply be calling on the Sarasvatī as he envisions her in his moment of inspiration—what the less poetically inclined amongst us might term as 'exaggeration.' At any rate, there is a definite down-scaling in the descriptions of her geography, which in fact reflects what geological studies tell us: widespread changes occurred in the configuration of river channels as a result of tectonic movements, and a once lush and green area through which the mighty river flowed consequently desiccated.[3] The Sarasvatī, therefore, no longer ran to the ocean, but disappeared in the sands. When exactly the drying up of much of the river occurred, however, is unclear, and opinions on this point vary considerably.[4] The *Ṛg Veda* (3:33) refers to the confluence of the Vipāś and the Śutudrī (Beas and Sutlej), which, as Witzel points out, indicates that the Beas had already captured the Sutlej from the Sarasvatī, thereby reducing the Sarasvatī's water supply.[5] This would suggest, then, that the depiction of our river in the *Ṛg Veda* may be recollective or hyperbolic.

[2] Witzel (2001, p.81) also suggests a recollection of the Iranian Harax^{v}aiti river in the praise of the Sarasvatī by the seer Vasiṣṭha, an immigrant from west of the Indus, in the seventh book of the *Ṛg Veda*.

[3] See Pal, Sahai, Sood, and Agrawal 1984; Radhakrishnan and Merh 1999.

[4] For a brief summary of the differing estimates of archaeologists, see Witzel 2001, p.80.

[5] Witzel 2001, p.81. Although Witzel makes a good point in regards to RV 3:33, I am not convinced by his conclusion that books 3, 7 and 10:75 of the *Ṛg Veda* "already depict the present day situation, with the Sarasvatī having lost most of its water to the Sutlej (and even earlier, much of it also to the Yamunā)."

The Sarasvatī flowed through Kurukṣetra, center of the Kuru state, and hence was incorporated into the new mythology of the region. Identified as 'the earth's choicest [place]' to establish one's sacred fire already in the *Ṛg Veda* (3:23:4), the Sarasvatī river of the Brāhmaṇas became the locus of mobile *sattra*, from the place of her waters' disappearance in the sands at Vinaśana to its source at Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa, the route to the heavenly world.

In terms of ritual, Vedic texts reflect a dramatic increase in the complexity and organization of ceremonial life, as instituted by the Kurus in the establishment of their realm in the twelfth to the ninth century B.C.E. Their new socio-politico-religious ideology, as Witzel describes,[6] was woven into a highly elaborated system of sacred ceremonies, supported by the increased stratification of the society into four *varṇa*. In this system, each individual had his place in the community and belonged to a particular stage in life, both of which were expressed through the rituals he engaged in. These religious rites, then, clearly reflected the social standing of the performer. Higher status might be gained through increasingly complex rituals, including year-long sacrifices, which, however, only the nobility could afford. In the end, this complicated network of ceremonies succeeded in unifying nomadic tribes into a state and in centralizing power under the ruling Kurus. The battles and cattle rustling of feuding chieftains were replaced by 'ritual competition' for status, which functioned as a means of controlling the aristocracy by keeping them busy. For these sacrifices, texts were composed and collected, and language was artificially archaicized to make new rituals look old and authentic.

In this complex system of rites, Sarasvatī, who was already closely connected with sacrifices, gradually took central stage. As we have seen in the *Ṛg Veda*, rituals were performed on her banks and accompanying hymns, some of which invoked Sarasvatī, were recited. Sarasvatī was also associated with the sacrificial goddesses Iḷā and Bhāratī, and, most importantly, with *dhī́*, the inspired thought that enables poets to compose hymns—hymns recited at sacrifices. *Dhī́*, in turn, is inextricably connected with *vā́c*, for inspired thought cannot help but express itself in speech, and speech in the form of hymns cannot exist without inspired thought. Consequently, Sarasvatī was identified with speech in the *Atharva* and the *Yajur Veda*, and their equivalence was definitively established in the Brāhmaṇas.

[6] Witzel 1995, esp. pp.8–16.

The importance of speech in ritual cannot be emphasized enough: without speech, there is no ritual. Sarasvatī as speech, therefore, is an essential component to any sacrificial rite, since hymns were unfailingly recited at all sacrifices. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that this was no ordinary recitation, as every word and every syllable had to be pronounced perfectly. If any error or omission occurred, the sacrifice would not be effective, and might even produce negative results. Speech was considered to have great potency—to make or to break—which consequently required proper handling. It did not, however, consist merely in powerful sounds; it had meaning, and therefore speech was knowledge.

That said, even in the case of inadvertent gaps in recitation, there was always hope for the petitioner, since, as the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* explains, through Sarasvatī as the dominant goddess of speech, all omissions could be rectified. Sacrifice was rendered continuous, and hence successful, through speech, whose fluency was akin to the uninterrupted flow of a river, i.e., the Sarasvatī. A connection between speech and Sarasvatī, therefore, was found in the fluidity of the river. On the other hand, through a break in fluency by way of intentional errors, ill effect could be brought on: Sarasvatī mantras recited in confusion, according to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, would deprive of speech the patron of a sacrifice.

Speech, therefore, was central to ritual, both in performance and result. The words pronounced set the sacrificial act in motion and brought about its outcome. Properly uttered speech could benefit, while incorrectly recited words could harm. The potency of speech, in sound and meaning, led to its application in ritual healing: in the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, as the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* recounts, Sarasvatī, who is Speech, heals Indra through speech.

In this ritualistic universe established by the Kurus, sacrifice became the dominant metaphor, in analogy with which all matters were described and explained. Creation itself was a kind of sacrifice. The creator Prajāpati, who himself is in fact also sacrifice (*yajñó vái prajā́patiḥ*),[7] produced speech, for sacrifice cannot be without speech. Through speech, either as words or as his consort, Prajāpati brought into being the universe. The words he pronounced materialized into the earth, the intermediate space, and the sky. In the Purāṇas, as we shall see, the creation story is no longer set into a ritualistic context, and the names of the major players are changed: Prajāpati is Brahmā, and his daughter Vāc is Sarasvatī.

[7] *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 3:6:5 [65, 3]. See also, for instance, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1:7:4:4; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 7:7:2.

PART TWO

EPIC AND PURANIC SARASVATĪ

EPIC AND PURANIC LITERATURE

Sarasvatī appears in the *Mahābhārata* epic and in many of the Purāṇas, which provide a wealth of information on the conceptual and iconographic development of the goddess. The epics and the Purāṇas belong to an entirely different category of religious literature than the Vedas. While the Vedas were recited by Brahmans in a ritual context and access to them was limited to the upper *varṇa* (Brahman, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya), the epics and the Purāṇas, couched in Brahmanical ideology, were conveyed in the form of narratives to virtually anyone. Like the Vedas, they were imparted orally, but, because the context was no longer ritual, their transmission did not require word for word, syllable for syllable, sound for sound precision. Some stanzas might be recited and commentary would follow. Stories were retold over and over again, but each time a little differently in accordance with the mood and inspiration of the storyteller and the response of his audience. The intention was to amuse and edify listeners, drawing them in by recounting popular myths they had probably heard countless times already. The narrators might expand, embellish, or abridge their tales of deeply cherished gods and ancient heroes, deviate to other topics, and so on.

While originally oral material, the epics and the Purāṇas were at some point put into writing, so that a written text existed to preserve what was transmitted and performed verbally. Narayana Rao, in his discussion of the Purāṇas, highlights the importance of the written version for its authors and communicators, who, as orally literate scholars, were "very proud of their knowledge of grammar and their ability to possess a written text of what they perform[ed] orally."[1] A written text, he suggests, "that says in writing that it is not a written text but a text spoken by a great God," is what makes the text authentic.[2]

The *Mahābhārata* (Mbh) epic centers on the story of the legitimacy of the succession to the kingdom of Kurukṣetra in northwestern India. In its present, written form, Alf Hiltebeitel argues, this *magnum opus* dates to a period from about the mid-second century B.C.E. to the year zero.[3]

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1 Narayana Rao 1993, p.95.
2 Ibid., p.96.
3 Hiltebeitel 2001, pp.18, 26–28. Biardeau (1997, p.87) suggests a period "close to

Furthermore, Hiltebeitel suggests, the epic was written by a group of Brahmans working as a team, "ghost-writing in collaboration with the fictional Vyāsa under the cover of the Naimiṣeya Ṛṣis," over a time period of at most a couple of generations.[4] Madeleine Biardeau, on the other hand, considers the *Mahābhārata* to be the work of a single author, a Brahman writing under the patronage of a royal court.[5]

In the case of the Purāṇas, which I will introduce individually at the beginning of Chapter Six, the dates assigned to each one can range over a period of as much as a thousand or more years. Clearly, as they stand today in printed form, the texts have undergone revisions and include numerous insertions. Although there are critical editions of the epics, most of the Purāṇas have yet to be critically edited. Even critical editions, it should be added, do not necessarily represent 'the' text itself, for not only are they subject to the choices made by the editors,[6] but, especially in the case of the Purāṇas, there are manuscripts that have not been consulted and others that have been lost. If we consider oral material, furthermore, the recitations of certain individual bards may never have been committed to writing. Trying to establish a specific time frame, therefore, does indeed present significant problems. I will focus, in Chapter Six, on a small number of Purāṇas generally assigned to a period between the third and the seventh century.

the beginning of our era, perhaps a little earlier." For a discussion of the growth and development of the *Mahābhārata*, see Brockington 1998, pp.130–58.

4 Hiltebeitel 2001, pp.20, 161–76; quoted passage from p.176.

5 Biardeau 1997, pp.87–88.

6 On the choices made by the editors of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, see, for instance, Biardeau 1977, 1981, and 1997, pp.85–87.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAHĀBHĀRATA

In the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī appears above all as a sacred river, along which pilgrimages are made. She is also represented as goddess of speech and knowledge. In relation to others, she is depicted as daughter, wife, and mother.

1. Mythology of the River

1.1 *Sacred River*

1.1.1 *Geography*

This best of rivers and greatest of streams (*nadīnām uttamā nadī*)[1] is described as embanked by *śāla* groves[2] and woods with all kinds of trees and creepers.[3] In stark contrast with the *Ṛg Veda*'s mighty, uncontrollable flood, bursting the ridges of mountains with her strong waves,[4] she has become "the safe, brimming Sarasvatī of the tranquil waters" (... *prasannasalilāṃ śivām ... paripūrṇāṃ sarasvatīm*).[5] Dhaumya, the priest of the Pāṇḍavas, speaks of her idyllically as "Sarasvatī of holy currents, full of lakes[6] and embanked by woods" lending her former impetuousness to the Yamunā (Mbh 3:88:2): *sarasvatī puṇyavahā hradinī vanamālinī / samudragā mahāvegā yamunā yatra pāṇḍava //*. As in the description of the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*,[7] her source is identified as Plakṣa [Prāsravaṇa],[8] and she is said to disappear

1 Mbh 3:82:56b. Cf. RV 2:41:16a *nadītame*.

2 Mbh 3:26:1d *sarasvatīśālavaneṣu*.

3 Mbh 3:98:13ab *sarasvatyāḥ pare pāre nānādrumalatāvṛtam*. See also, for example, Mbh 3:88:2ab: *sarasvatī puṇyavahā hradinī vanamālinī /*.

4 RV 1:3:12a; 6:61:2ab. See pp.11–12 above.

5 Mbh 3:179:15. Translated by van Buitenen in 1975, p.570. There is one instance (Mbh 3:130:3ab) where she is described as billowing: *eṣā sarasvatī puṇyā divyā codhavatī nadī /*.

6 E.g., Lake Dvaita (Mbh 3:174:21cd): *sarasvatīm etya nivāsakāmāḥ saras tato dvaitavanaṃ pratīyuḥ //*.

7 PB 25:10. See pp.84–85 above.

8 Mbh 3:82:5c *plakṣād devī srutā*.

in the sands at Vinaśana.[9] In the expanded geography of the epic (and of the Purāṇas), however, she reappears at Camasodbheda, Śivodbheda, and Nāgodbheda.[10] Camasodbheda is where all ocean-bound rivers converge into the Sarasvatī: *eṣa vai camasodbhedo yatra dṛśyā sarasvatī / yatrainām abhyavartanta divyāḥ puṇyāḥ samudragāḥ //* (Mbh 3:130:5). After reemerging at Camasodbheda, she empties into the sea at Prabhāsa, having reached there via Udapāna, where her underground presence is manifested through the coolness of the herbs (Mbh 9:34:78ff.). Like in the *Ṛg Veda*, then, she is made to debouche in the ocean, as if to recall her Ṛg-Vedic greatness.[11] Amongst the holiest confluences are that of the Sarasvatī and the Aruṇā, known as the Goddess's Ford (*tīrthadevyāḥ*),[12] and that of the Gaṅgā and the Sarasvatī.[13]

1.1.2 *Mythology and Dharma of Geography*

Epic stories provide mythological accounts for the Vedic-like geographical features of the Sarasvatī river. The responsibility for the disappearance of the river in the sands, a natural phenomenon, for instance, is assigned to the Niṣādas. They are a wild, aboriginal tribe described as man-eaters (Mbh 2:28:44c *niṣādān puruṣādāṃś ca*), robbers, fishermen, and hunters,[14] in disdain for whom the Sarasvatī entered the earth so as not to cross their lands, lest they should know her (Mbh 3:130:3c–4d):

etad vinaśanaṃ nāma sarasvatyā viśāṃ pate //
dvāraṃ niṣādarāṣṭrasya yeṣāṃ dveṣāt sarasvatī /
praviṣṭā pṛthivīṃ vīra mā niṣādā hi māṃ viduḥ //

Thus it is because of the impure, unrighteous, 'adharmic' Niṣādas, in whose dwelling the Vedas are not heard (Mbh 12:315:12–14) that the Sarasvatī chooses to disappear in the sands. Likewise our river changes her course for the sake of the righteous. So as to be seen by the *brahmarṣi* (Brahman seers) of the Naimiṣa forest,[15] we are told, she turns eastward (Mbh 9:36:35):

[9] Mbh 3:130:3cd *etad vinaśanaṃ nāma sarasvatyā viśāṃ pate*. Cf. Mbh 3:80:118.
[10] Mbh 3:80:119ef *camase ca śivodbhede nāgodbheda ca dṛśyate*. See also Mbh 3:130:5ab quoted in the main text on this page.
[11] RV 7:95:2b. See p.12 above. Mbh 3:80:79ab *tato gatvā sarasvatyāḥ sāgarasya ca saṃgame*.
[12] Mbh 3:81:131 *tato gacchen naraśreṣtha tīrthaṃ devyā yathākramam / sarasvatyāruṇāyāś ca saṃgamaṃ lokaviśrutaṃ //*.
[13] Mbh 3:82:34 *gaṅgāyāś ca naraśreṣtha sarasvatyāś ca saṃgame / snāto 'śvamedham āpnoti svargalokaṃ ca gacchati //*.
[14] Böhtlingk and Roth 1855–75, vol.4, p.239; Monier-Williams 1899, p.561.
[15] On the Naimiṣeya Ṛṣis, see Hiltebeitel 2001, pp.97–104.

yatra bhūyo nivavṛte prāṅmukhā vai sarasvatī /
ṛṣīṇāṃ naimiṣeyāṇām avekṣārthaṃ mahātmanām //

Subsequently, however, the large number of seers crowded on her banks find themselves in need of a broader *tīrtha* 'ford, holy bathing place' (9:36:48). To accommodate them, the river, out of compassion, this time turns westward: *ṛṣīṇāṃ puṇyatapasāṃ kāruṇyāj janamejaya // tato nivṛtya rājendra teṣām arthe sarasvatī / bhūyaḥ pratīcyabhimukhī susrāva saritāṃ varā //* (9:36:51cd–52).

What we have here is clearly more than just stories woven around an expanded yet Veda-reminiscent geography. The myths have a didactic purpose, 'the education of the Dharma king.'[16] The restoration of Dharma is in fact the central concern of the epics and the function of the *avatāra* (the descent/incarnation of Viṣṇu), and therefore even the myths about the geography of the river Sarasvatī reflect this dominant preoccupation with Dharma. Hence they convey not only where the Sarasvatī flows, but why. When she does not wish to be seen by the unrighteous Niṣādas, in whose dwelling the Vedas are not heard, she enters the earth. When she desires to be seen by the righteous, twice-born Naimiṣeya seers, she changes her course. And when her banks become overcrowded with seers, she changes her path yet again to provide them with more space for the performance of their practices. The choices she makes, then, are on the basis of Dharma versus *adharma*. She does not choose which direction she wishes to move in, but, more importantly in the Brahman authors' view, she chooses the course that facilitates Dharma and avoids *adharma*. In the *Mahābhārata*, this Dharmic direction is the Veda-reminiscent one. The flow of her waters, therefore, represents the flow of Dharma, appropriate to the riverine goddess of knowledge. The discrimination between righteousness and unrighteousness that is ascribed to Sarasvatī in the choice of her course is only natural, for where there is knowledge—and in this case the goddess of knowledge—there must necessarily be discrimination.

1.1.3 *Inhabitants and Pilgrims*

Many, many seers, then, dwelt on the banks of the Sarasvatī. Among sages of great renown, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra (9:41:4),[17] and Dadhīca

[16] Hiltebeitel 2001, title, pp.4, etc. The Dharma king in question is Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas.
[17] *āśramo vai vasiṣṭhasya sthāṇutīrthe 'bhavan mahān / pūrvataḥ paścimaś cāsīd viśvāmitrasya dhīmataḥ //*.

(3:98:12d–13a)[18] had their hermitages along the river. Furthermore, Yakṣas (spirits), Vidyādharas ('knowledge/spell-holders,' semi-divine beings), demons, gods, and other classes of beings[19] all engaged in ascetic practices and in the performance of sacrifices on the Sarasvatī:

> *tāṃ yakṣagandharvamaharṣikāntām āyāgabhūtām iva devatānām /*
>
> ... [Sarasvatī] dear to seers, Gandharvas, and Yakṣas, as if the sacrificial ground of the gods ... (3:174:24ab)

The various rites carried out on the sacred river's banks included also Sārasvata sacrifices (3:129:21ab).[20] Additionally, people went on lengthy pilgrimages of the fords (*tīrthayātrā*) along the Sarasvatī, against the river's course. In accordance with Dakṣa's pronouncement, they came by the thousands to die here in order to attain heaven (3:130:1–2):

> *iha martyās tapas taptvā svargaṃ gacchanti bhārata /*
> *martukāmā narā rājann ihāyānti sahasraśaḥ //*
>
> *evam āśīḥ prayuktā hi dakṣena yajatā purā /*
> *iha ye va mariṣyanti te vai svargajito narāḥ //*

Thus when Kṛṣṇa passed away, his sixteen thousand wives drowned themselves in the Sarasvatī, and having been reborn as Apsarases, they attained their lord (18:5:21).[21]

1.2 *Pilgrimage Expanded*

1.2.1 *Pilgrimage Accounts*

The *tīrthayātrā* along the Sarasvatī is a considerably extended and reformulated version of the series of sacrificial sessions described in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (25:10).[22] Numerous *tīrtha* are included in its course; according to some manuscripts, there are *tīrtha* at every step, numbering in the hundreds and thousands: *tathā tīrthāny anekaśaḥ / sahasraśatasaṃkhyāni prathitāni pade pade.*[23]

[18] *dadhīcasyāśramaṃ yayuḥ // sarasvatyāḥ pare pāre ...*
[19] See 9:36:20–21 and 9:41:5, for instance.
[20] *iha sārasvatair yajñair iṣṭavantaḥ surarṣayaḥ /.*
[21] *ṣoḍaśastrīsahasrāṇi vāsudevaparigrahaḥ / nyamajjanta sarasvatyāṃ kālena janamejaya / tāś cāpy apsaraso bhūtvā vāsudevam upāgaman //.*
[22] See pp.84–85 above.
[23] See critical edition, passage 224 (excluded from the critical edition) in note on 9:36:35.

There are two lengthy pilgrimage accounts in the *Mahābhārata*, one in the Vana Parvan and another in the Śalya Parvan. In the first narrative (3:80–153), Yudhiṣṭhira sets out with sage Lomaśa, having heard Pulastya's (as reported by Nārada) and Dhaumya's descriptions of numerous *tīrtha*, including some on the Sarasvatī. Reflecting a shift from complex, costly rituals to the simpler practice of visiting sacred places, Pulastya explains the merit acquired from pilgrimage to these sites, often in terms of the Vedic ritual equivalent: while, for instance, by bathing at the Śrīkuñja Tīrtha on the Sarasvatī, one attains the reward of the Agniṣṭoma (3:81:91 *śrīkuñjaṃ ca sarasvatyāṃ tīrthaṃ bharatasattama / tatra snātvā naro rājann agniṣṭomam phalaṃ labhet //*), by bathing at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Sarasvatī, one obtains a Horse sacrifice and goes to heaven (3:82:34 *gaṅgāyāś ca naraśreṣtha sarasvatyāś ca saṃgame / snāto 'śvamedham āpnoti svargalokaṃ ca gacchati //*). Lomaśa, on the other hand, recounts many legends associated with the different *tīrtha*.

The Śalya Parvan (9:34–54) includes an account of Baladeva's pilgrimage specifically along the Sarasvatī, and is thus of greater relevance for our study.[24] Here Vaiśampāyana describes to Janamejaya which *tīrtha* Baladeva and his extensive entourage visited, and the legends associated with these *tīrtha*.[25] The Vedic ritual equivalent of bathing in a particular *tīrtha* is also sometimes incorporated into the story itself. At the Udayāna (Well) Tīrtha (9:35), for instance, the sage Trita is said to have fallen into a pit near the Sarasvatī (9:35:24c–25d),[26] and, having been left there by his brothers Ekata and Dvita (9:35:27),[27] he mentally performed a Soma sacrifice (9:35:32–35).[28] The gods appeared

[24] Baladeva's pilgrimage as "a yātsattra [mobile *sattra*] refitted to epic ends" is discussed by Hiltebeitel 2001, pp.140–54. As he points out, it takes place during the time of the great battle at Kurukṣetra, and Baladeva is accompanied by the Yādavas, who are thereby kept out of the fighting. The beginning of the pilgrimage at Prabhāsa by the sea, furthermore, is near Dvāraka, where the Yādavas live.
[25] For a list of the *tīrtha*, see Indras 1967, pp.73–78.
[26] *tathā kūpo 'vidūre 'bhūt sarasvatyās taṭe mahān // atha trito vṛkaṃ dṛṣṭvā pathitiṣṭhantam agrataḥ / tad bhayād apasarpan vai tasmin kūpe papāta ha /.*
[27] *taṃ jñātvā patitaṃ kūpe bhrātarāv ekatadvitau / vṛkatrāsāc ca lobhāc ca samutsṛjya prajagmatuḥ //.*
[28] *pāṃsugras te tataḥ kūpe vicintya salilaṃ muniḥ / agnīn saṃkalpayām āsa hotre cātmānam eva ca // tatas tāṃ vīrudhaṃ somaṃ saṃkalpya sumahātapāḥ / ṛco yajūṃṣi sāmāni manasā cintayan muniḥ / grāvāṇaḥ śarkarāḥ kṛtvā pracakre 'bhiṣavaṃ nṛpa // ājyaṃ ca salilaṃ cakre bhāgāṃś ca tridivaukasām / somasyābhiṣavaṃ kṛtvā cakāra tumulaṃ dhvanim // sa cāviśad divaṃ rājan svaraḥ śaikṣas tritasya vai / samavāpa ca taṃ yajñaṃ yathoktaṃ brahmavādibhiḥ //.*

(9:35:39b–d),[29] and no sooner had he asked that henceforth one who bathes in this well should attain the equivalent of drinking Soma, that the Sarasvatī river rose up from the bottom of the well and lifted him to the surface (9:35:45cd–46ab).[30] The usual pattern in this pilgrimage account is that the name of the *tīrtha* is given and a myth connected with the name is told in brief. Then Janamejaya asks questions to elicit a far more detailed narration of the legend, which Vaiśampāyana thereupon provides.

Instead of sacrificial sessions, then, what we have here are story-telling sessions full of Vedic, and also specifically ritual, allusions. Pilgrimage to the *tīrtha* along the Sarasvatī, a devotional act, largely replaces complex sacrifices, with which it is equated in merit. This shift from complicated, restricted ritualism to simpler, open-to-all devotional pilgrimage is in fact a necessary one, given the intended audiences of the respective texts. While the Vedas were accessible only to the twice-born and their sacrifices were performed by Brahmans, the epics and the Purāṇas are addressed to the widest possible audience and hence many of the practices they describe and advocate are open virtually to anyone.

I do not propose here to recount and discuss every myth associated with every *tīrtha* along the Sarasvatī river, but rather to focus on three of the stories that present new or modified features and thus reflect changes in the conception of Sarasvatī: the Saptasārasvata Tīrtha myth (9:37), the curse of Sarasvatī at the Sthāṇu Tīrtha (9:41–42), and the story of her son Sārasvata who dwelt at the Sārasvata Tīrtha (9:50).

1.2.2 *Saptasārasvata Tīrtha*

It will be remembered that in the *Ṛg Veda* (6:61:10b), Sarasvatī was called *saptásvasar*, although none of her sisters was named there. In the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī is endowed with seven names and flows through seven different sites (9:37:3–4):

> *rājan sapta sarasvatyo yābhir vyāptam idaṃ jagat /*
> *āhūtā balavadbhir hi tatra tatra sarasvatī //*
>
> *suprabhā kāñcanākṣī ca viśālā mānasahṛdā /*
> *sarasvatī oghavatī suveṇur vimalodakā //*
>
> O king, there are seven Sarasvatī which cover this universe,
> for wherever Sarasvatī was invoked by the strong, there [was]:

[29] *sahitāḥ sarvadevatāḥ / prayayus tatra yatrāsau tritayajñaḥ pravartate //.*

[30] *yaś cehopaspṛśet kūpe sa somapagatiṃ labhet // tatra cormimatī rājann utpapāta sarasvatī /.*

> Suprabhā, Kāñcanākṣī, Viśālā, Mānasahṛdā,
> Oghavatī, Suveṇu, Vimalodakā [are the] Sarasvatī.

Always in connection with a sacrifice, invoked by Brahmā at Puṣkara she flowed under the name of Suprabhā (9:37:12);[31] and in the Himavant mountain as Vimalodā (9:37:26c–f);[32] remembered by the sages, she was known as Kāñcanākṣī in Naimiṣa (9:37:16cd, 18a);[33] worshipped by seers at a sacrifice at Gaya, there she was called Viśālā (9:37:19cd–20ab);[34] at Kosala, invoked by Auddālaka she was named Mānasahṛdā (9:37:22, 23cd);[35] revered by the royal seer, king Kuru, she, as Suveṇu, came to Kurukṣetra (9:37:24);[36] and likewise at Kurukṣetra, she was invoked as Oghavatī by Vasiṣṭha (9:37:25).[37] All seven, we are told, join at Saptasārasvata Tīrtha (9:37:27).[38]

The theme of the multiple forms of the one Sarasvatī is connected with her *Ṛg Veda* identity as one of the Āpas, of whom she appeared as the representative in RV 10:30:12.[39] Above all, however, it arises from the sacredness in which she was held and which therefore enabled her to function as their representative. "All rivers are Sarasvatī-s," says the *Mahābhārata* (12:255:39a *sarvā nadyaḥ sarasvatyaḥ*), and in the Saptasārasvata Tīrtha myth, sevenfold specifics are provided. To this list may be added the Aruṇā, as recounted in the story surrounding the Sthāṇu Tīrtha (9:42:24cd).[40]

In the continuing play on the numeral seven, a sub-story is told about the sage Maṅkaṇaka. Seeing a beautiful woman bathing naked in the river, he spilt his semen into the Sarasvatī (9:37:30 *dṛṣṭvā ... / snāyantīṃ rucirāpāṅgīṃ digvāsasam aninditām / sarasvatyāṃ mahārāja caskande*

[31] *tac chrutvā bhagavān prītiḥ sasmārātha sarasvatīm / pitāmahena yajatā āhūtā puṣkareṣu vai / suprabhā nāma rājendra nāmnā tatra sarasvatī //.*

[32] *vimalodā bhagavatī brahmaṇā yajatā punaḥ / samāhūtā yayau tatra puṇye haimavate girau //.*

[33] *te samāgamya munayaḥ sasmarur vai sarasvatīm // ... // naimiṣe kāñcanākṣī tu.*

[34] *āhūtā saritāṃ śreṣṭā gayayajñe sarasvatī // viśālāṃ tu gayeṣv āhur ṛṣayaḥ saṃśitavratāḥ /.*

[35] *uttare kosalābhāge puṇye rājan mahātmanaḥ / auddālakena yajatā pūrvaṃ dhyātā sarasvatī // ... / manohradeti vikhyātā sā hi tair manasā hṛtā //.*

[36] *suveṇur ṛṣabhadvīpe puṇyā rājarṣisevitā / kuroś ca yajamānasya kurukṣetre mahātmanaḥ //.* (I follow the Malayalam manuscript here for *puṇyā rājarṣisevitā*.)

[37] *oghavaty api rājendra vasiṣṭhena mahātmanā / samāhūtā kurukṣetre divyatoyā sarasvatī //.*

[38] *ekībhūtās tatas tās tu tasmiṃs tīrthe samāgatāḥ / saptasārasvataṃ tīrthaṃ tatas tat prathitaṃ bhuvi //.*

[39] See pp.16–17 above.

[40] For the Sthāṇu Tīrtha myth, see pp.104–09 below.

vīryam ambhasi //).[41] He picked it up and placed it into a jar, wherein it divided into seven parts, from which seven seers were born, from whom in turn sprang the Maruts (9:37:31 *tad retaḥ sa tu jagrāha kalaśe vai mahātapāḥ / saptadhā pravibhāgaṃ tu kalaśasthaṃ jagāma ha / tatra ṛṣayaḥ sapta jātā jajñire marutāṃ gaṇāḥ //*). This story would make Sarasvatī, therefore, the mother of the seven seers.

Thus what we find in the myth of the Saptasārasvata Tīrtha is an expansion of the *saptásvasar* concept, in that names are given and locations identified. We also find the conception of Sarasvatī as mother, a theme appearing likewise in the Sārasvata Tīrtha legend, as we shall see. She is not, however, a consort here, for Maṅkaṇaka's semen drops from him when he sees another woman.

1.2.3 *Sthāṇu Tīrtha*

In the Sthāṇu Tīrtha, we are told, Śiva (Sthāṇu) performed austerities (9:41:5–6)[42] and his son Skanda was installed as commander of the celestial army (9:41:7).[43] Viśvāmitra, furthermore, brought Vasiṣṭha to this *tīrtha* by the power of his austerities (9:41:8).[44] It is the last of these stories which is recounted here.

Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha were performing austerities (*tapas*) everyday. Seeing Vasiṣṭha's energy (*tejas*), Viśvāmitra was overcome with jealousy and resolved to have the Sarasvatī bring Vasiṣṭha before him so that he could kill him (9:41:9–11).[45] The goddess appeared in front of Viśvāmitra in human or human-like form, pale and trembling (9:41:14–15):

tata enaṃ vepamānā vivarṇā prāñjalis tadā /
upatasthe munivaraṃ viśvāmitraṃ sarasvatī //

hatavīrā yathā nārī sābhavad duḥkhitā bhṛśam /
brūhi kiṃ karavāṇīti provāca munisattamam //

Then pale and trembling, with joined palms,
Sarasvatī approached the best of sages Viśvāmitra.

Like a woman whose husband has been slain, greatly afflicted with grief,
she addressed [that] foremost of sages: "Say! What shall I do?"

When asked to bring Vasiṣṭha to him, she began to sway like a creeper moved by the wind (9:41:17cd *vivyathe suvirūḍheva latā vāyusamīritā //*). In fear she went to Vasiṣṭha (9:41:18),[46] who told her to do as Viśvāmitra had ordered, lest the latter curse her (9:41:23).[47] As she was bearing him away, Vasiṣṭha praised her thus (9:41:29–31):

pitāmahasya sarasaḥ pravṛttāsi sarasvati /
vyāptaṃ cedaṃ jagat sarvaṃ tavaivāmbhobhir uttamaiḥ //

tvam evākāśagā devi megheṣūtsṛjase payaḥ /
sarvāś cāpas tvam eveti tvatto vayam adhīmahe //

puṣṭir dyutis tathā kīrtiḥ siddhir vṛddhir umā tathā /
tvam eva vāṇī svāhā tvaṃ tvayy āyattam idaṃ jagat /
tvam eva sarvabhūteṣu vasasīha caturvidhā //

You have arisen from the Grandfather's lake, O Sarasvatī,
and this entire universe is pervaded by your most excellent waters.

You alone are moving through space, O goddess, you release the (rain)
water in the clouds,
and you alone are all the Waters. From you we learn.

You are prosperity, splendour, glory, success, growth, and also Umā.
You alone are Speech. You, *svāhā*. This world is dependent on you.
You alone dwell fourfold in all these beings.

Having brought Vasiṣṭha to Viśvāmitra (9:41:32cd),[48] as Viśvāmitra was looking for a weapon to slay Vasiṣṭha, Sarasvatī bore Vasiṣṭha to the other shore (9:41:34a–d)[49] to protect him. Viśvāmitra in his anger cursed her to carry blood (9:41:35–36),[50] and thus, for one year, her waters flowed

[41] Given the main story of the Saptasārasvata Tīrtha, where Sarasvatī plays the central role, one wonders if this naked woman could not be Sarasvatī herself in human form, as L. C. D. C. Priestley, Professor Emeritus of the University of Toronto, suggests (personal communication).

[42] *yatra sthāṇur mahārāja taptavān sumahat tapaḥ / yatrāsya karma tad ghoraṃ pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ // yatreṣṭvā bhagavān sthāṇuḥ pūjayitvā sarasvatīm / sthāpayām āsa tat tīrthaṃ sthaṇutīrtham iti prabho //.*

[43] *tatra sarve surāḥ skandam abhyaṣiñcan narādhipa / senāpatyena mahatā surārivinibarhaṇam //.*

[44] *tasmin sarasvatītīrthe viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ / vasiṣṭhaṃ cālayām āsa tapasogreṇa tac chṛṇu //.*

[45] *viśvāmitravasiṣṭhau tāv ahany ahani bhārata / spardhāṃ tapaḥkṛtāṃ tīvrāṃ cakratus tau tapodhanau // tatrāpy adhikasaṃtāpo viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ / dṛṣṭvā tejo vasiṣṭhasya cintām abhijagāma ha / tasya buddhir iyaṃ hy āsīd dharmanityasya bhārata // iyaṃ sarasvatī tūrṇaṃ matsamīpaṃ tapodhanam / ānayiṣyati vegena vasiṣṭhaṃ japatāṃ varam / ihāgataṃ dvijaśreṣṭhaṃ haniṣyāmi na saṃśayaḥ //.*

[46] *tathāgatāṃ tu tāṃ dṛṣṭvā vepamānāṃ kṛtāñjalim / viśvāmitro 'bravīt kruddho vasiṣṭaṃ śīghram ānaya //.*

[47] *trāhy ātmānaṃ saricchreṣṭe vaha māṃ śīghragāmiṇī / viśvāmitraḥ śaped dhi tvāṃ mā kṛthās tvaṃ vicāraṇām //.*

[48] *vegenovāha taṃ vipraṃ viśvāmitrāśramaṃ prati /.*

[49] *taṃ tu kruddham abhiprekṣya brahmahatyābhayān nadī / apovāha vasiṣṭaṃ tu prācīṃ diśam atandritā /.*

[50] *tato 'pavāhitaṃ dṛṣṭvā vasiṣṭam ṛṣisattamam / abravīd atha saṃkruddho viśvāmitro hy amarṣaṇaḥ // ... śoṇitaṃ vaha kalyāṇi rakṣogrāmaṇisaṃmatam //.*

mixed with blood (9:41:37cd).[51] In memory of the incident, the *tīrtha* was called Vasiṣṭhāpavāha 'Carrying Away Vasiṣṭha' (9:41:39ab).[52]

One of the interesting features of this myth is Sarasvatī's temporary appearance in human or human-like form. Likewise, she shows herself in this manifestation not only to Śvetaketu (3:132:2ab *sākṣād atra śvetaketur dadarśa sarasvatīṃ mānuṣadeharūpām*), but also to the sage Tārkṣya, who, as we shall see, calls her 'fair-limbed' (1:184:2c *cāru-sarvāṅgī*). In the Brāhmaṇas, it will be remembered, Vāc had materialized before the Gandharvas as a beautiful woman so as to get back the Soma,[53] and in the *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa* and much later in the *Brahma Purāṇa* account of the Barter for Soma, this Vāc was identified with Sarasvatī.[54] Nonetheless, as we have seen, Vāc as a beautifully attired, passionate woman was known already in the *Ṛg Veda* (10:71:4cd).[55]

What distinguishes the *Mahābhārata* references to Sarasvatī in human-like form from those in the myth of the Barter for Soma is that it is not Sarasvatī as Vāc, but Sarasvatī as Sarasvatī, who is endowed with this female form. In this sense, therefore, Sarasvatī in her own right appears here for the first time as a woman. The reason for her human-like appearance, however, cannot be reduced simply to Brahmanical precedent by way of Vāc, since other, larger factors, including *avatāra* ideology, image-making, and gender issues versus the power of *tapas*, have come into play.

In terms of image-making, the Vedic gods were never represented, except that some of them, like Indra, might be endowed, in poetic expression, with a human form. In epic and Puranic times, the situation changes dramatically, as gods take on temporary and life-long incarnations, as their human-like (although often multi-armed) iconographies are described in the Purāṇas, and as images of them are extensively produced. The *avatāra*, 'descents,' of Viṣṇu in human, animal, and fish forms are ushered in, accompanied by numerous other deities in their task of re-establishing Dharma on earth.[56] The multiplication of *avatāra* and of their attendants certainly spread the conception and the popularity of

[51] *avahac choṇitonmiśraṃ toyaṃ saṃvatsaraṃ tadā* //.
[52] *evaṃ vasiṣṭhāpavāho loke khyāto janādhipa* /.
[53] See the Barter for Soma, pp.72–84 above.
[54] See pp.80–83 above.
[55] See p.73, note 47 above.
[56] The term *avatāra* does not appear in the *Mahābhārata* itself, but the conception, central to the narrative (Sutton 2000, pp.156–57), is frequently alluded to through the use of the verb *ava-tṛ* (Hiltebeitel 2001, p.109, note 56; p.232, etc.).

gods taking on human or other bodily form, and Sarasvatī likewise could not have remained untouched by this trend. It is in part to the rise of *avatāra* ideology, therefore, that I would attribute the appearance of Sarasvatī as a woman in the *Mahābhārata*.

The earliest extant human-like representations of (originally) Vedic and post-Vedic gods, whether within a Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain context, are roughly contemporaneous with the end-period of the *Mahābhārata*'s composition (mid-second century B.C.E. to the year zero) or not far posterior to it (Kuṣāṇa period)—hence preceding written iconographic prescriptions. Indra and Brahmā, for instance, are depicted as attendants of a Buddha in an early-first-century C.E. sculpture from the Swāt region of Pakistan,[57] while the first surviving image of our Sarasvatī is an inscribed Jain sculpture of Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā near Mathurā from about the third century C.E. (fig.3).[58] I would therefore suggest that the epic Sarasvatī's feminine form may reflect also gradually increasing pan-Indian tendencies of making images of gods of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain pantheons. Specifically in terms of Sarasvatī, it might be said that these *Mahābhārata* appearances contributed in paving the way for the goddess's image-making. However, it is also possible that it could have been the other way around: the female figure of Sarasvatī in the epic might conceivably have been inspired from already existing, but no longer extant or known to be extant, representations of her.

In our myth under discussion, Sarasvatī is portrayed not only as a woman, but also as a frightened one. The authors' choice of depicting her in female form may also have been motivated by their need to represent her as terrified in the face of apparently more powerful forces. As a mere woman, fear is more easily, and perhaps in the perception of the authors, more naturally attributable to her. Also, as we have seen previously in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* version of the Barter for Soma, women, following the example of Vāc, "are connected with deceptive things" (*móghasaṁhitāḥ*).[59] While Sarasvatī in our *Mahābhārata* myth is not drawn to delusory pleasures like dance and song, she is clearly not using good judgement in her choice of actions, just as Vāc was considered to have made a bad choice in turning away from the recitation [of the Vedas]

[57] Huntington 1985, p.120, Pl.7.11. According to the caption, this sculpture belongs to the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente in Rome. The institute has since been renamed Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO).
[58] On the Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā image of Sarasvatī, see pp.231–35 below.
[59] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 3:2:4:6. See p.79 above.

to dance and song. As a woman, she is frightened and makes bad decisions. In the *Mahābhārata*, for the first time Sarasvatī is endowed with a smallness of spirit so distinctively reflected in her form. On the geographical level, it parallels the river's decrease in size and volume, as it acquires a description as 'safe' and 'brimming' (3:179:15).[60] In the context of this myth, Sarasvatī's considerably weakened personality is set in contrast with the prevalent conception of the extraordinary power of *tapas*. She is, after all, a woman, and no match for the *tapas*-practising seers. At the cost of her own power as a goddess, that of the sages—through their austerities—is highlighted, as she trembles before them in fear of their curses. She who in the *Ṛg Veda* was a mighty, uncontrollable flood, an all-too-powerful mother-goddess figure before whom her worshippers trembled,[61] is here for the first time portrayed as weak, afraid, and vulnerable. Threatened by Viśvāmitra, Sarasvatī finds herself at a loss as to what to do: in the confusion engendered by fear, the hitherto valiant goddess, who presides over knowledge, loses, in addition, the power of discrimination vital to knowledge. She runs from one sage to the other, desperately trying to avoid being cursed by either one. And then, when she realizes Vasiṣṭha understands her predicament and will not put a curse on her, Sarasvatī good-naturedly yet foolishly tries the impossible: to protect Vasiṣṭha while obeying Viśvāmitra and thus to avoid the latter's malediction. Predictably, Viśvāmitra does not appreciate her well-intentioned cat-and-mouse game, and she is ultimately cursed to flow with blood.

Given that the function of these myths is to glorify the various *tīrtha* alongside this most sacred of rivers, surely their authors intended to show Sarasvatī in the best possible light, despite the overwhelming power of the sages' *tapas*. It is regrettable, however, that they inadvertently robbed her of her discrimination, and hence knowledge, over which she presides, in the process. Had she fearlessly refused to involve herself in Viśvāmitra's petty jealousy and been cursed at the outset, her glory and grandeur would not have been reduced.

Despite appearing as a frail, frightened figure, misguidedly attempting to do what is right, Sarasvatī, in memory of who she was in the past, is praised by Vasiṣṭha as a great goddess, on whom the universe depends. In other words, the portrayal of Sarasvatī in this myth is entirely

[60] See p.97 above.
[61] See p.15 above.

uneven, recalling her glorious past while redefining her in a most unflattering manner.

The story then continues in 9:42, where some sages, shocked to find innumerable demons drinking Sarasvatī's water mixed with blood at the Vasiṣṭhāpavāha Tīrtha, rescue her (9:42:6–7).[62] When the river is purified, however, the demons are afflicted with hunger (9:42:14d).[63] Out of compassion for them, Sarasvatī assumes a new form called Aruṇā (9:42:24cd),[64] significantly meaning 'reddish' because the demons drank her water mixed with blood. Having bathed in this river, the demons attain heaven (9:42:25ab).[65]

1.2.4 *Sārasvata Tīrtha*

At the Sārasvata Tīrtha, sage Sārasvata taught the Vedas to other sages (9:50:3cd).[66] As Vaiśampāyana recounts, sage Dadhīca performed such austerities that Indra began to fear him (9:50:5a–6b).[67] Hence, a beautiful Apsaras called Alambusā was sent to distract him (9:50:7),[68] in which she succeeded: seeing her, his semen dropped into the Sarasvatī, and the river goddess took it up (9:50:9a–c).[69] In time she gave birth to a boy (9:50:11ab),[70] whom Dadhīca called Sārasvata (9:50:21),[71] and he proclaimed (9:50:22–23):

> *eṣa dvādaśavārṣikyām anāvṛṣṭyāṃ dvijarṣabhān /*
> *sārasvato mahābhāge vedān adhyāpayiṣyati //*

[62] *athāgamya mahābhāgās tat tīrthaṃ dāruṇaṃ tadā / dṛṣṭvā toyaṃ sarasvatyāḥ śoṇitena pariplutam / pīyamānaṃ ca rakṣobhir bahubhir nṛpasattama // tān dṛṣṭvā rākṣasān rājan munayaḥ saṃśitavratāḥ / paritrāṇe sarasvatyāḥ paraṃ yatnaṃ pracakrire //*. According to a passage not included in the critical edition (no.256 following 9:42:12), it is only after worshipping Śiva that they rescue her: *ārādhya paśubhartāraṃ mahādevaṃ jagatpatim / mokṣayām āsus tāṃ devīṃ saric chreṣṭāṃ sarasvatīm //*.
[63] *rākṣasāḥ kṣudhayārditāḥ /*.
[64] *aruṇām ānayām āsa svāṃ tanuṃ puruṣarṣabha //*. For the theme of the multiple forms of the one Sarasvatī, see pp.102–03 above.
[65] *tasyāṃ te rākṣasāḥ snātvā tanūs tyaktvā divaṃ gatāḥ //*.
[66] *vedān adhyāpayām āsa purā sārasvato muniḥ //*.
[67] *āsīt pūrvaṃ mahārāja munir dhīmān mahātapāḥ / dadhīca iti vikhyāto brahmacārī jitendriyaḥ // tasyātitapasaḥ śakro bibheti satataṃ vibho /*.
[68] *pralobhanārthaṃ tasyātha prāhiṇot pākaśāsanaḥ / divyām apsarasaṃ puṇyāṃ darśanīyām alambusām //*.
[69] *tāṃ divyavapuṣaṃ dṛṣṭvā tasya ṛṣer bhāvitātmanaḥ / retaḥ skannaṃ sarasvatyāṃ tat sā jagrāha nimnagā //*.
[70] *suṣuve cāpi samaye putraṃ sā saritāṃ varā /*.
[71] *tavaiva nāmnā prathitaḥ putras te lokabhāvanaḥ / sārasvata iti khyāto bhaviṣyati mahātapāḥ //*.

puṇyābhyaś ca saridbhyas tvaṃ sadā puṇyatamā śubhe /
bhaviṣyasi mahābhāge matprasādāt sarasvati //

During a twelve-year drought, to the best of the twice-born
Sārasvata will teach the Vedas, O fortunate one.

And, O beautiful one, always the most sacred amongst holy rivers
you will be through my grace, O fortunate Sarasvatī.

And so it happened, at least with Sārasvata. During the drought, Sarasvatī fed her son fish (9:50:37),[72] and after the twelve-year period, when the famished seers had lost knowledge of the Vedas (9:50:40ab),[73] Sārasvata taught them the scriptures anew (9:50:48b–d).[74]

In the *Ṛg Veda*, it will be remembered, Sarasvant was Sarasvatī's male counterpart, connected or identified with Apāṃ Napāt, the son of the Waters (1:164:52).[75] Here, Sārasvata is her son. As mother, she takes on a role already familiar in a general sense in the *Ṛg Veda* (2:41:16a)[76] and in a more specific way in the *Yajur Veda*'s healing of Indra (VS 19:94ab).[77] She plays, however, an almost passive role in that she functions as a carrier of Dadhīca's semen, which falls into her simply because she is there. The sage, steeped in austerities, is roused by another, and Sarasvatī, out of devoted respect for him (9:50:12ef),[78] carries his semen. Acting as a surrogate rather than a real mother, she does not develop possessive maternal instincts towards the child, and therefore readily offers the infant to Dadhīca after birth. Although the sage is delighted and blesses Sarasvatī and Sārasvata, as a celibate, solitary ascetic intent on continuing his austerities, he is not about to start raising a child like an ordinary householder. Hence Dadhīca names the surrogate mother as the actual mother, returning the child to her. She, in turn, joyfully accepts Sārasvata and lovingly raises him, keeping him alive throughout the twelve-year drought.

With a sage as father and a riverine goddess of knowledge, identified through Vāc with the Vedas, as mother, Sārasvata cannot but grow into a sage himself (9:50:36b *muniḥ sārasvatas tadā*). Kept alive by Sarasvatī

[72] *na gantavyam itaḥ putra tavāhāram ahaṃ sadā / dāsyāmi matsyapravarān uṣyatām iha bhārata //.*

[73] *teṣāṃ kṣudhāparītānāṃ naṣṭā vedā vidhāvatām /.*

[74] *munayas te vidhānataḥ / tasmād vedān anuprāpya punar dharmaṃ pracakrire //.*

[75] See p.11 above.

[76] See p.14 above.

[77] See p.46 above.

[78] *brahmarṣe tava putro 'yaṃ tvadbhaktyā dhārito mayā //.*

during the drought, he then becomes, one might say, her mouthpiece, her vehicle to teach the Vedas to countless sages. As a mere channel, his personality is left undescribed, and as her vehicle, his name is simply a reflection of hers. His very *raison-d'être* in this myth is to teach the Vedas so that they may be preserved in the world, a purpose appropriate to the goddess of knowledge. In a male-dominated society, however, 'she' cannot perform this task directly and that is why 'he' is brought in. Vāc as an abstract concept might have been an acceptable teacher of the Vedas to her all-male students, but Sarasvatī, as we have seen, is very clearly female in the *Mahābhārata*, even taking on the form of a woman in certain scenes. The introduction of the male Sārasvata represents a concession to the social realities of the time. The inevitable compromise, however, is merely in outer appearance, for Sārasvata is none other than Sarasvatī cross-dressing for a job that is hers alone.

The *Mahābhārata* does contain a scene, however, where Sarasvatī in female form is approached by a sage for instruction in Dharma and ritual worship (3:184).[79] As we shall see, her beauty is a source of constant distraction for sage Tārkṣya, who cannot stop referring to it. The epics and the Purāṇas contain quite a number of stories of sages (as well as gods) dropping their semen at the sight of an attractive woman, usually an Apsaras, as in the myths of the Saptasārasvata Tīrtha and the Sārasvata Tīrtha. While there are often several reasons/purposes for these twists in the plots, it is indeed noteworthy that they also serve to justify the social realities of the times: male students should have a male teacher, for if even gods and sages can be aroused by beautiful women, how much more so ordinary men.

2. Goddess of Knowledge

2.1 *Sarasvatī and Vāc*

In the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī is celebrated as goddess of knowledge. In contrast with the Brāhmaṇas, here the connection with knowledge is direct in that she no longer requires the mediation of Vāc: she does not preside over knowledge because she is Vāc; she presides over it because she is Sarasvatī. In the Brāhmaṇas, it was Vāc who was called mother of

[79] See pp.112–15 below.

the Vedas (*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2:8:8:5).[80] In the *Mahābhārata*, on the other hand, Nārāyaṇa says to sage Nārada (12:326:5cd): "Behold goddess Sarasvatī, the mother of the Vedas, established in me" (*vedānāṃ mātaraṃ paśya matsthāṃ devīṃ sarasvatīm* //). This represents yet another step in the process of the identification of Sarasvatī and Vāc. The two have become one, and 'Vāc' as a separate name now recedes further and further into the background. Although Sarasvatī is indeed called Vāc (e.g., 12:306:6cd)[81] as well as Vāṇī (e.g., 3:132:2)[82] in the *Mahābhārata*, Vāc increasingly becomes simply speech as a function of Sarasvatī. As speech, Sarasvatī enters the body (12:306:6cd *sarasvatīha vāgbhūtā śarīraṃ te pravekṣyati* //) and dwells in the tongue (12:231:8d *jihvāyāṃ vāk sarasvatī* //). Hence Bhīṣma, in veneration of Viṣṇu, says "... goddess Sarasvatī is [your] tongue" (6:61:56b *devī jihvā sarasvatī* /). When she appears to sage Yājñavalkya, she is adorned with vowels and consonants, sounding the syllable Om: *tataḥ pravṛttātiśubhā svara-vyañjanabhūṣitā / oṃkāram āditaḥ kṛtvā mama devī sarasvatī* (12:306:14).

2.2 *Instructing Tārkṣya*

There is one *adhyāya* (3:184) in particular where Sarasvatī appears as goddess of knowledge. It is indeed she as a woman who materializes, without cross-dress, and that, in turn, constitutes a problem for her male student, who simply cannot stop praising her beautiful form. The student in question, sage Tārkṣya, approaches her for instruction in Dharma and ritual worship (3:184:2–3):

kiṃ nu śreyaḥ puruṣasyeha bhadre
kathaṃ kurvan na cyavate svadharmāt /
ācakṣva me cārusarvāṅgi sarvaṃ
tvayānuśiṣṭo na cyaveyaṃ svadharmāt //

kathaṃ cāgniṃ juhuyāṃ pūjaye vā
kasmin kāle kena dharmo na naśyet /
etat sarvaṃ subhage prabravīhi
yathā lokān virajāḥ saṃcareyam //

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[80] See p.60 above.
[81] See Sanskrit original in main text on this page.
[82] 3:132:2 *sākṣād atra śvetaketur dadarśa sarasvatīṃ mānuṣadeharūpām / vetsyāmi vāṇīm iti sampravṛttāṃ sarasvatīṃ śvetaketur babhāṣe //.*

What, good lady, is best for a man here on earth?
What way should he act lest he stray from his Law?
Pray tell me all, woman of beautiful limbs:
Instructed by you I won't stray from my Law.

How should one make offerings into the fire,
How worship and when, lest his Law be impaired?
Propound all this to me, fair woman,
So that I may roam the worlds without passions.[83]

Although Sarasvatī begins by speaking of knowing *brahman* and of constant and undistracted study and purity (3:184:5ab),[84] *mokṣa* is hardly the goal. She describes celestial cities and which offerings lead to which realms (3:184:5c–10).[85] She speaks of purity at the physical and caste levels, as well as of the purity that comes from knowing the Vedas (3:184:13).[86] This is connected with her stipulation that only a priest who knows the texts (a *śrotriya*) may perform the Agnihotra (3:184:14).[87] She then describes the result of the Agnihotra (3:184:15).[88]

Tārkṣya recognizes Sarasvatī's vast knowledge in the 'outcome of rites,' and asks who she is (3:184:16).[89] Sarasvatī explains that she has

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[83] Translation by van Buitenen in 1975, p.580. I have added 'all' (*sarvam*) to his translation of 3:184:2c.
[84] *yo brahma jānāti yathāpradeśaṃ svādhyāyanityaḥ śucir apramattaḥ /.*
[85] *sa vai puro devapurasya gantā sahāmaraiḥ prāpnuyāt prītiyogam // tatra sma ramyā vipulā viśokāḥ supuṣpitāḥ puṣkariṇyaḥ supuṇyaḥ /* (vv.5c–6b) ... *paraṃ lokaṃ gopradās tvāpnuvanti dattvānaḍvāhaṃ sūryalokaṃ vrajanti / vāsaṃ dattvā* (vv.8a–c) "... [he] shall go to the cities of God's city and find delight amidst the Immortals. There are lovely and vast and sorrow-free and holy flowering lotus lakes [vv. 5c–6b] ... The givers of cows reach highest heaven, those who give an ox gain the world of the sun; giving lodging ... [vv.8a–c]" (van Buitenen 1975, p.580. Since I do not divide the translation into separate lines according to *pāda* in the notes, as van Buitenen does, I have replaced his capitalized letters at the beginning of each *pāda* with small case.)
[86] *na cāśucir nāpy anirṇiktapāṇir nābrahmavij juhuyān nāvipaścit / bubhukṣavaḥ śucikāmā hi devā nāśraddhadhānād dhi havir juṣanti //* "An impure man, one with unwashed hands, not knowing the *Veda*, nor wise, may not offer; for the Gods when they hunger demand one to be clean, and take no food from the unbeliever." (van Buitenen 1975, p.581.)
[87] *nāśrotriyaṃ devahavye niyuñjyān moghaṃ parā siñcati tādṛśo hi / apūrṇam aśrotriyam āha tārkṣya na vai tādṛg juhuyād agnihotram //* "A *śrotriya* priest [should] be engaged for the rite, any other will throw the oblation away: none but an accomplished *śrotriya*, Tārkṣya, I say, may offer the *agnihotra*." (van Buitenen 1975, p.581.)
[88] *gavāṃ lokaṃ prāpya te puṇyagandhaṃ paśyanti devaṃ paramaṃ cāpi satyam //* (3:184:15cd) "They ... will go to the fragrant world of the cows and behold the God who is highest and true." (van Buitenen 1975, p.581.)
[89] *kṣetrajñabhūtāṃ paralokabhāve karmodaye buddhimatipraviṣṭām / prajñāṃ ca devīṃ subhage vimṛśya pṛcchāmi tvāṃ kā hy asi cārurūpe //* "I think of you, who are my

risen from the Agnihotra to resolve the doubts of the priests (3:184:17ab): *agnihotrād aham abhyāgatāsmi viprarṣabhāṇāṃ saṃśayacchedanāya*. Her territory within the ritual context, therefore, is knowledge.

Tārkṣya thereafter praises her celestial body (3:184:18), and she speaks of the origin of beauty (3:184:19–20).[90] He then asks her for instruction regarding final release (3:184:21),[91] and Sarasvatī talks of study, gifts, vows, and *yoga* (3:184:22cd).[92] Afterwards, she begins to describe the tree of paradise from which rivers of offerings flow (3:184:23–24)[93] in a cosmic kind of sacrifice. The mention of rivers naturally calls to mind the river Sarasvatī, who in her function as goddess of knowledge teaches Tārkṣya about them.

Interestingly, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the beauty of our goddess of knowledge in the story about the instruction of Tārkṣya. Although Sarasvatī appears in human or human-like celestial form in other instances in the *Mahābhārata*, as noted above,[94] what distinguishes this passage from the others is not only the frequency of references to the beauty of her form (3:184:2c, 12b, 16d, 18c),[95] but the consequent underlying tension thereby created within the context. The sage Tārkṣya, although he requests instruction in Dharma "... so that I may roam the worlds without passions" (3:184:3d)[96] is unable to refrain from mentioning her beauty—and to make it even more direct, from addressing her in terms of it—on four out of five occasions when he speaks in this

guide in matters celestial, piercingly wise of the outcome of rites, as an insightful Goddess, and ask you, beautiful lady, who are you?" (van Buitenen 1975, p.581.)

[90] Quoted on p.115 below.

[91] *ācakṣva me taṃ paramaṃ viśokaṃ mokṣaṃ paraṃ yam praviśanti dhīrāḥ //* (3:184:21cd) "Propound to me the superior bliss of final release, which the wise secure." (van Buitenen 1975, p.582.)

[92] *svādhyāyadānavratapuṇyayogais tapodhanā vītaśokā vimuktāḥ //* "... and with study, gifts, vows, and holy Yoga the ascetics find freedom beyond all grief." (van Buitenen 1975, p.582.)

[93] *tasyātha madhye vetasaḥ puṇyagandhaḥ sahasraśākho vimalo vibhāti / tasya mūlāt saritaḥ prasravanti madhūdakaprasravaṇā ramaṇyaḥ // śākhāṃ śākhāṃ mahānadyaḥ saṃyānti sikatāsamāḥ / dhānāpūpā māṃsaśākāḥ sadā pāyasakardamāḥ //* "In the middle of it, a fragrant cane tree of a thousand branches stands pure and effulgent: from its roots well up and flow the rivers, the lovely streams of the honeyed water. [23] The great rivers flow from branch to branch like falling sand, those rivers of grain and cakes, meat and potherbs, with the mud of milk and rice. [24]" (van Buitenen 1975, p.582.)

[94] See pp.104–05 above.

[95] If *subhagā* is here understood as 'beautiful,' then three more instances can bc added: 3:184:3c,16c,18d.

[96] Quoted on pp.112–13 above.

adhyāya. Following Tārkṣya's initial request to Sarasvatī, the narrator-sage Mārkaṇḍeya also comments that Tārkṣya is filled with love: *evaṃ pṛṣṭā prītiyuktena tena* (3:184:4a). Subsequent to the latter's fourth reference to Sarasvatī's beautiful form, in this final instance as a surpassingly lovely celestial body (3:184:18c *rūpaṃ ca te divyam atyantakāntaṃ*),[97] the fair goddess decides it is time to address the topic herself (3:184:19–20):

> *śreṣṭhāni yāni dvipadāṃ variṣṭha*
> *yajñeṣu vidvann upapādayanti /*
> *tair evāhaṃ saṃpravṛddhā bhavāmi*
> *āpyāyitā rūpavatī ca vipra //*
>
> *yac cāpi dravyam upayujyate ha*
> *vānaspatyam āyasaṃ pārthivaṃ vā /*
> *divyena rūpeṇa ca prajñayā ca*
> *tenaiva siddhir iti viddhi vidvan //*
>
> I have grown on the choicest of gifts, O sage,
> Most eminent man, which the offerers bring
> When they make their oblations at their rites;
> They filled me and made me beautiful, priest.
>
> Whatever is used as an offering gift,
> Be it wooden or iron or made of clay,
> Know, sage, that a man by that gift prevails
> In celestial beauty as well as wisdom.[98]

Beauty, therefore, arises from sacrifice and is imparted both to the worshipper and the worshipped. Together with wisdom, it is attained by the sacrificer. Having heard Sarasvatī's admonition in the form of an explanation of the effects of sacrificial offerings, Tārkṣya no longer addresses her—one might even suggest, no longer dares to address her—in terms of her charming looks.

As opposed to the above-mentioned *Mahābhārata* passages where Sarasvatī appears as a woman or as mother to Sārasvata in entirely non-sexual contexts, she is portrayed here as an attractive female, capable of arousing even a sage. In her enchanting beauty she comes closer to Vāc in the Brāhmaṇa myth of the Barter for Soma.[99]

[97] 3:184:18ab is equally suggestive: *na hi tvayā sadṛśī kācid asti vibhrājase hy atimātraṃ yathā śrīḥ /* "There is no woman the equal of you, for you shine as radiantly as Śrī." (van Buitenen 1975, p.581.)

[98] van Buitenen 1975, p.582.

[99] See pp.72–84 above.

3. Sarasvatī as Daughter, Wife, and Mother

In the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī appears as daughter, wife, and mother. In relation to Brahmā, she is a daughter: *ṛtā brahmasutā sā me satyā devī sarasvatī* // (12:330:10cd).[100] As a river, her source is Plakṣa [Prāsravaṇa].[101] It is also said, however, that she was born from the Grandfather's Lake: *pitāmahasya sarasaḥ pravṛttāsi sarasvatī* (9:41:29ab). *Pitāmaha* is the paternal grandfather, an epithet of the same Brahmā. In the Brāhmaṇas, it will be remembered, Vāc was the daughter of Prajāpati,[102] who in post-Vedic mythology becomes Brahmā. We will have occasion to return, in the Purāṇas, to the fully developed relationship of Sarasvatī and Brahmā, derived from that of Vāc and Prajāpati.

Sarasvatī is wife to Manu (5:115:14d),[103] as well as to sage Matināra, whom she chooses as husband following his twelve-year sacrifice on her banks (1:90:25–26).[104] She then bears Matināra a son called Taṃsu (1:90:26, 28).[105] She is also, as we have seen, a kind of surrogate mother to Sārasvata, born of the semen of Dadhīca, fallen into the Sarasvatī (9:50:9–11).[106]

At the level of relationships, then, there are some new developments in the epic. Of overwhelming importance is Sarasvatī's relationship with Brahmā, which finds further, extensive development in the Purāṇas, as we shall see.

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[100] She is, however, also produced, together with the Vedas, from the mind of Kṛṣṇa in 6:63:5cd (*sarasvatīṃ ca vedāṃś ca manasaḥ sasṛje 'cyutaḥ //*). Yet she is no more his daughter than the Vedas are his sons.

[101] See p.97 above.

[102] See pp.60–62 above.

[103] 5:115:14 *yathā bhūmyāṃ bhūmipatir urvaśyāṃ ca purūravāḥ / ... sarasvatyāṃ yathā manuḥ //.*

[104] 1:90:25–26ab *matināraḥ khalu sarasvatyāṃ dvādaśavārṣikaṃ sattram ājahāra // nivṛtte ca sattre sarasvaty abhigamya taṃ bhartāraṃ varayām āsa /.*

[105] 1:90:26cd *tasyāṃ putram ajanayat taṃsuṃ nāma //*; 1:90:28ab *taṃsuṃ sarasvatī putraṃ matinārād ajījanat /.*

[106] See pp.109–11 above.

CHAPTER SIX

PURĀṆAS

Unlike the epics, which have a carefully constructed and integrated storyline, the Purāṇas, for the most part, consist of pieces with different contents, including narrative, didactic, and ritualistic material—"a kind of lumber-room for all manner of minor pieces," as Biardeau puts it.[1] We find scattered within them, therefore, a great deal of diverse information on various aspects of Sarasvatī mythology, ritual worship, and iconography. My discussion of Sarasvatī in the early Purāṇas will center on the Brahmā-Sarasvatī myth, the names of the goddess, her ritual worship, and her iconography, focusing on a small number of Purāṇas assigned to a period between the third and the seventh century.

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (MkP), composed in western India near the river Narmadā, is dated to a period between the third and the seventh century C.E.[2] According to Frederick Eden Pargiter's study, the chapters of this Purāṇa may be divided into three groups based on time-period:

a) third century or earlier: chapters 45–81, 94–137
b) between the third and the sixth century: chapters 1–44
c) sixth or perhaps fifth century: *Devī Māhātmya* in chapters 81–93[3]

Yuko Yokochi, on the other hand, argues that the *Devī Māhātmya* was composed around the second half of the eighth century, perhaps even in the early ninth century.[4] My discussion of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* will draw on chapters 23 and 72 [b) and a) above, respectively].

The *Matsya Purāṇa* (MtP), composed and circulated by people also living around the river Narmadā, has been assigned dates ranging from the fourth century B.C.E. to 1250 C.E.[5] Rajendra Chandra Hazra[6] sug-

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[1] Biardeau 1997, p.121. Biardeau's statement is directed at the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

[2] Hazra 1940, pp.8–13; Kane 1930–62, vol.5.2, p.903 (fourth to sixth century); Pargiter 1904, pp.xiii–xx. For more extensive references, see Rocher 1986, pp.191–96.

[3] Pargiter 1904, pp.xiii–xx.

[4] Yokochi 2004, pp.21–23, note 42.

[5] Kantawala 1964, p.8, fourth century B.C.E. to 1250 C.E.; Dikshitar 1951–55, vol.1, p.xxiv, fourth century B.C.E. to the third century C.E.; Kane 1930–62, vol.5.2, pp.899–900, 200–400 C.E.

[6] Hazra 1940, pp.50–51, 176–77.

gested different dates for each of the chapters or groups of chapters (I list here only the ones in which Sarasvatī appears):

a) last quarter of the third or first quarter of the fourth century C.E.: chapters 3–4
b) 550–650: chapters 66, 260–61
c) earlier than 750, if not 700: chapter 171
d) 600–900: chapter 101
e) 700–1075: chapter 183
f) earlier than 1100: chapter 13

My discussion of the contents of the *Matsya Purāṇa* will center largely on chapters 3, 4, 66, and 260–61 [a)–b) above].

The *Vāyu Purāṇa* (VāyuP) is assigned to about the fourth to the fifth century.[7] It may originally have been identical with the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*.

Some of the proposed dates for the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (VdP), compiled in southern Kashmir or northern Panjab, are 400–500,[8] 450–650,[9] and 600–1000.[10] I will refer to the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* largely for comparative purposes in my Iconography of Sarasvatī section (4.).

1. Brahmā and Sarasvatī

As noted above,[11] Sarasvatī is Brahmā's daughter in the *Mahābhārata* (12:330:10cd). In the Purāṇas she becomes also his consort. The Brahmā-Sarasvatī relationship is based on that of Prajāpati and his daughters, especially Vāc, in the Brāhmaṇas:[12] Brahmā is Prajāpati (MtP 3:33d), and Sarasvatī is Vāc. The Puranic account which most closely follows the Brāhmaṇas is not found in what is considered amidst the earliest Purāṇas, but in the *Brahma Purāṇa* (102:2cd–8ab).[13] However, the long-

7 E.g., Kane 1930–62, vol.5.2, p.907. Further references in Rocher 1986, pp.243–45.
8 Hazra 1958, p.212.
9 Priyabala Shah in her edition of *khaṇḍa* 3 of the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, 1958, p.xxvi.
10 Kane 1930–62, vol.5.2, p.910. Further references in Rocher 1986, pp.250–52.
11 See p.116 above.
12 See pp.60–72 above.
13 The *Brahma Purāṇa* contains portions from different periods and has passages borrowed from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa*, and from other Purāṇas. See Rocher 1986, p.155. Unlike in the *Ṛg Veda* and in the Brāhmaṇas, in the *Brahma Purāṇa* version of the myth, Śiva intercepts before Brahmā is able to pair with his daughter. By

est Puranic account appears in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (3:30–44), which we will examine here.

For the purpose of creation, we are told, Brahmā produced Sāvitrī from half of his body, calling her also Śatarūpā, Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī, and Brahmāṇī (MtP 3:30–32):

sāvitrīṃ lokasṛṣṭyarthaṃ hṛdi kṛtvā samasthitaḥ /
tataḥ sañjapatas[14] *tasya bhittvā deham akalmaṣam //*

strīrūpam ardham akarod ardham puruṣarūpavat /
śatarūpā ca sākhyātā sāvitrī ca nigadyate //

sarasvaty atha gāyatrī brahmāṇī ca parantapa /
tataḥ svadehasambhūtām ātmajām ity akalpayat //

In order to create the world, he who was evenly-postured (?) established Sāvitrī in his heart.
Then he whispered [something] and split his pure body [in two].

Half he made in the form of a woman, half in the likeness of a man.
She is named Śatarūpā and is called Sāvitrī,

Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī, and Brahmāṇī, O enemy-burner.
[And] so he made [her] out of himself, from his own body.[15]

Brahmā fell in love with Sāvitrī (3:33), and even when his sons protested, he could see nothing but her face (3:34).[16] As she circumambulated him, he did not wish to keep turning around and around, ashamed as he was of his passion before his sons, and so faces appeared on the sides and back of his head (3:36a–38b):

atha pradakṣiṇaṃ cakre sā pitur varavarṇinī /
putrebhyo lajjitasyāsya tadrūpālokanecchayā //

threatening the creator, he averts the *ápavrata* and thereby succeeds in protecting Dharma.
14 As L. C. D. C. Priestley, suggests (personal communication), *sañjapatas* might be a misprint for *sañjayatas*.
15 Cf. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2:3:10:1, where Prajāpati has Sītā Sāvitrī as offspring: *prajā́patiḥ sómaṁ rā́jānam asṛjata / táṃ tráyo védā ánv asṛjyanta / tā́n háste 'kuruta / átha ha sī́tā sāvitrī́ / sómaṁ rā́jānaṃ cakame / śraddhā́m u sá cakame/ sā́ ha pitáraṃ prajā́patim úpa sasāra / táṁ hovāca / námas te astu bhagavaḥ / úpa tvāyāni* [1] */ prá tvā padye / sómaṃ vái rā́jānaṃ kāmaye / śraddhā́m u sá kāmayata íti /* ... Sarasvatī as daughter of Brahmā is also mentioned in *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* 23:30d, and in a number of other, later Purāṇas.
16 3:33–34 *dṛṣṭvā tāṃ vyathitas tāvat kāmabāṇārdito vibhuḥ / aho rūpam aho rūpam iti cāha prajāpatiḥ // tato vasiṣṭhapramukhā bhaginīm iti cukruśuḥ / brahmā na kiñcid dadṛśe tanmukhālokanād ṛte //* (I have corrected *tanmukhālokam ādṛte* to *tanmukhālokanād ṛte* in 3:34d.) "When he looked at her, the lord Prajāpati was smitten with the arrows of love. Disturbed, he cried out, 'Oh what beauty! Oh what loveliness!' " (Translation by Dimmitt and van Buitenen in 1978, p.35.) "Then [the seers,] led by Vasiṣṭha, cried out:

āvirbhūtaṃ tato vaktraṃ dakṣiṇaṃ pāṇḍugaṇḍavat /
vismayasphuradoṣṭhaṃ ca pāścātyam udagāt tataḥ /...
caturtham abhavat paścād vāmaṃ kāmaśarāturam /

Then that lovely woman circumambulated her father,
but he was ashamed of his desire to stare at her beauty
in the presence of his sons.

So a face appeared on his right side, with pale cheeks.
And another sprang up in the back, its lip quivering in wonder ...
And then a fourth one too, on his left side, wounded by love's arrows.[17]

And when Sāvitrī flew up, a fifth face sprang up atop Brahmā's head so as to gaze at her lovely form (3:39–40).[18] Her elevation proved to be a futile attempt at escaping the attentions of her father. Brahmā's passion, however, had consequences, the *Matsya Purāṇa* narrator interjects (3:39cd–40ab):

sṛṣṭyarthaṃ yat kṛtaṃ tena tapaḥ paramadāruṇam //
tat sarvaṃ nāśam agamat svasutopagamecchayā /

The tremendous *tapas* which Brahmā had practised for the purpose of creation
was entirely annihilated through his desire to unite with his own daughter.[19]

Having sent off his sons to create (3:41),[20] Brahmā married Śatarūpā and made love to her inside a pavilion within a lotus for as long as a hundred years (3:43a–44b):

'[She is our] sister,' but Brahmā saw nothing but the sight of her face." (My translation.)

[17] Dimmitt and van Buitenen 1978, p.35. 3:38cd reads: *tato 'nyad abhavat tasya kāmāturatayā tathā*. Dimmitt and van Buitenen insert 3:38cd before 3:38ab as "Then another face appeared owing to his love-sickness ..." Although 3:38cd clearly indicates yet another face, which would make it a fifth, for Brahmā had one to begin with, to which three (one on the right, one in the back, and one on the left) were already added, 3:40cd speaks of yet another face identified as a 'fifth,' rather than a sixth (*tenordhvaṃ vaktram abhavat pañcamam ...*). It would appear, therefore, that 3:38cd is simply another wording of 3:38ab, confirmed by their mutual connection with the pain of love (3:38b *kāmaśarāturam*; 3:38d *kāmāturatayā*).

Cf. the *Mahābhārata* (1:203–04) story of the Apsaras Tilottamā, produced by Viśvakarman on Brahmā's orders so as to seduce and thereby produce enmity between the demons Sunda and Upasunda, who in the end kill each other over her. When, upon being created and instructed of her mission, the beautiful Tilottamā circumambulates Brahmā, all the gods and seers turn to gaze upon her, except Śiva (Sthāṇu), who grows four faces, and Indra, who sprouts one thousand eyes. Interestingly, in this story Brahmā alone does not look at the Apsaras. Cf. also *Matsya Purāṇa* 13:52b, where Sarasvatī is said to be enshrined in the faces of Brahmā: *brahmāsyeṣu sarasvatī*.

[18] It is noteworthy that Prajāpati is referred to as *pañcamukha* in the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (2:9).

[19] Dimmitt and van Buitenen 1978, p.35.

[20] *tatas tān abravīt brahmā putrān ātmasamudbhavān / prajāḥ sṛjadhvam abhitaḥ*

upayeme sa viśvātmā śatarūpām aninditām /
sambabhūva tayā sārdham atikāmāturo vibhuḥ /
sa lajjāc cakame devaḥ kamalodaramandire //
yāvad abdaśataṃ divyaṃ yathānyaḥ prākṛto janaḥ /

The universal soul married blameless Śatarūpā.
The lord, overcome with intense passion, united with her.
Out of shame, the god, like an ordinary man, made love [to her] in a pavilion
inside a lotus for as long as a hundred celestial years.

Śatarūpā then bore him a son, Manu, the primal man (3:44cd).[21]

As in the Brāhmaṇas, the incestuous nature of the relationship is indeed a problematic issue. In the *Matsya Purāṇa*, Brahmā's mind-born sons protest (3:34), and the creator experiences shame before them, so much so that he conceals his fifth head with matted locks (3:40), perhaps to cover up the extent of his passion for the lovely Sāvitrī. His desire to unite with his own daughter leads to the loss of all his intense *tapas* practised for the purpose of creation (3:39cd–40ab), thus impairing him in his function as creator. Whereas in the Vedic accounts the father was punished by a celestial archer for his sin, here he is punished by the sin itself, both in his shame and in his loss of *tapas*. Creation, the very task for which he produced Sāvitrī, is assigned to his sons, so that Brahmā may remain alone with her, freed from the distress caused by consciousness of his own guilt, which he otherwise feels before them. The *Matsya Purāṇa* also includes a moralistic supplement to deal with this issue. When asked how Brahmā could have committed such a transgression (4:1), Matsya the Fish incarnation explains that gods are not subject to the same duties and prohibitions as humans, and thus their deeds are not to be judged (4:6). And yet in 3:44b Brahmā in his act was compared to an ordinary man (*yathānyaḥ prākṛto janaḥ*)!

Brahmā and Gāyatrī, Matsya continues, are as inseparable as light and shadow, and therefore there is no sin in their union (4:9–10). Nevertheless, the sense of the sinfulness of the act continues to pursue even the creator, for, the Purāṇa tells us, Brahmā was ashamed of himself and cursed Kāma (4:11). Hence, in the end, the union of the father with his daughter remains a sin, both in human and in celestial eyes.

sadevāsuramānuṣīḥ // "So Brahmā spoke to those sons who had sprung from him, saying, 'From now on you must produce all the creatures, as well as the gods, demons and human beings.' " (Dimmitt and van Buitenen 1978, p.35.)

[21] *tataḥ kālena mahatā tasyāḥ putro 'bhavan manuḥ //.*

2. Names of Sarasvatī

2.1 *Rivers*

One of the ways in which Sarasvatī acquires various names is through her identification with different rivers. It will be remembered that in the *Mahābhārata* (9:37:3–4), in direct connection with the *Ṛg Veda* passage where Sarasvatī is called *saptásvasar* (6:61:10b), we find seven Sarasvatī rivers, each given a distinct name and location, and yet understood to be seven forms of the one Sarasvatī. In this superimposition of the Sarasvatī on other rivers, the names of these rivers become her own additional names. She is thus Suprabhā, Kāñcanākṣī, Viśālā, Mānasahṛdā, Oghavatī, Suveṇu, and Vimalodakā.[22]

2.2 *Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, and Brahmāṇī*

Far better known, on the other hand, are some of the different names of Sarasvatī which bear no particular connection with her riverine aspect. In the *Matsya Purāṇa* (3:31–32), as we have seen, her name is interchangeable with Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, and Brahmāṇī. As thc spouse of Brahmā, she is Brahmāṇī. Her connection with Śatarūpā, on the other hand, is unclear.[23] As for the word *gāyatrī*, it denotes one of the metres in which Vedic hymns were composed, and therefore it indicates a form of speech. It is, furthermore, the name of an invocation to the Sun (Savitṛ) in the *Ṛg Veda* (3:62:10), and as such it is also known by the name of Sāvitrī. As an integral part of the Upanayana ceremony, a prerequisite for the study of the Vedas, the Gāyatrī mantra is whispered into the boy's ear. The *Manu Smṛti* explains that "... the birth marked by the tying of the belt of rushes is his Vedic birth, and in it the verse to the sun-god is said to be his mother and the teacher his father" (2:170 *tatra yad brahmajanmāsya mauñjībandhanacinhitam // tatrāsya mātā sāvitrī pitā tv ācārya ucyate //*).[24] The mantra is then to be repeated every single day of a twice-born's life. The Gāyatrī mantra is believed to embody the essence of the Vedas, for, according to the *Manu Smṛti*, Prajāpati produced it by milk-

[22] See pp.102–03 above.

[23] Anand Swarup Gupta (1962, p.73) connects Śatarūpā with the *viśvarūpā* epithet of Sarasvatī.

[24] Translation by Doniger and Smith in 1991, pp.34–35.

ing out one foot from each of the three Vedas (2:77). As an encapsulated form of the Vedas, the Gāyatrī is Vāc itself, both as speech and as the knowledge it conveys, and therefore also Sarasvatī.

There is another Sāvitrī, daughter of king Aśvapati and wife of Satyavant, who is, however, closely connected with the above Sāvitrī/Gāyatrī, seemingly her very incarnation. As the *Mahābhārata* (3:277–83) recounts, following eighteen years of austerities and recitation of the Sāvitrī, the goddess appeared to childless king Aśvapati (3:277:10).[25] Although he asked for the boon of many sons (3:277:14cd),[26] Sāvitrī replied that she had already spoken of his desire to the Grandfather (Brahmā), and announced, on behalf of Brahmā, the imminent birth of a girl (3:277:16–17).[27] When the baby was born, she was named Sāvitrī, "for she had been given by Sāvitrī when she [the goddess Sāvitrī] was pleased with the oblations he [the king] had offered with the *sāvitrī* [mantra]" (3:277:24).[28] The child grew into an extraordinarily beautiful woman, likened in splendour to the embodiment of Śrī (3:277:25ab).[29] Such was her beauty that no man dared choose the celestial maiden (*devakanyā*) for his bride (3:227:26cd–27).[30] Overcome with concern, the king sent Sāvitrī off to find a husband (3:277:36ab).[31] And so, accompanied by elderly counsellors, she set out on a pilgrimage to all the *tīrtha* and hermitages (3:277:41).[32] Upon her subsequent return, she told her father about the blind king Dyumatsena, whose realm had fallen into enemy hands and who lived with his wife and son Satyavant in the vast wilderness of the forest, performing austerities. It was Satyavant, she declared, whom she had chosen for her husband. Sage Nārada, who happened to be present, exclaimed in dismay that Sāvitrī's choice was a great wrong, for the virtuous Satyavant blessed with all qualities would die in one

[25] *pūrṇe tv aṣṭādaśe varṣe sāvitrī tuṣṭim abhyagāt / svarūpiṇī tadā rājan darśayām āsa taṃ nṛpam //.*

[26] *putrā me bahavo devi bhaveyuḥ kulabhāvanāḥ //.*

[27] *pūrvam eva mayā rājann abhiprāyam imaṃ tava / jñātvā putrārtham ukto vai tava hetoḥ pitāmahaḥ // prasādāc caiva tasmāt te svayambhūvihitād bhuvi / kanyā tejasvinī saumya kṣipram eva bhaviṣyati //.*

[28] *sāvitryā prītayā dattā sāvitryā hutayā hy api / sāvitrīty eva nāmāsyāś cakrur viprās tathā pitā //.* Translation by van Buitenen in 1975, p.762. Square-bracketed portions are mine.

[29] *sā vigrahavatīva śrīr vyavardhata nṛpātmajā /.* Cf. 3:277:29d *devī śrīr iva rūpiṇī //.*

[30] *prāpteyaṃ devakanyeti dṛṣṭvā sammenire janāḥ // tāṃ tu padmapalāśākṣīṃ jvalantīm iva tejasā / na kaścid varayām āsa tejasā prativāritaḥ //.*

[31] *idaṃ me vacanaṃ śrutvā bhartur anveṣaṇe tvara /.*

[32] *evaṃ sarveṣu tīrtheṣu dhanotsargaṃ nṛpātmajā / kurvatī dvijamukhyānāṃ taṃ taṃ deśaṃ jagāma ha //.*

year to the day (3:278:11–22).[33] Urged to find another man, she adamantly refused (3:278:23–26)[34] and was wed to the prince Satyavant (3:279:15–17).[35] For one year she lived with him and his parents in the forest, always remembering Nārada's words (3:279:23).[36] When the appointed time arrived, she greeted Yama with folded palms and, through wise speech arising from virtuousness and determination, she who was possessed of the power of her austerities secured four boons from him: king Dyumatsena would regain first his sight and second his kingdom, and then one hundred sons would be born to Aśvapati, and also, as a fourth boon, to Sāvitrī by Satyavant (3:281:10–45). The following exchange then ensued (3:281:50–51, 53):

yama uvāca

yathā yathā bhāṣasi dharmasaṃhitaṃ
mano 'nukūlaṃ supadaṃ mahārthavat /
tathā tathā me tvayi bhaktir uttamā
varaṃ vṛṇīṣvāpratimaṃ yatavrate //

sāvitry uvāca

na te 'pavargaḥ sukṛtād vinākṛtas
tathā yathānyeṣu vareṣu mānada /
varaṃ vṛṇe jīvatu satyavān ayaṃ
yathā mṛtā hy evam ahaṃ vinā patim // ...

varātisargaḥ śataputratā mama
tvayaiva datto hriyate ca me patiḥ /
varaṃ vṛṇe jīvatu satyavān ayaṃ
tavaiva satyaṃ vacanaṃ bhaviṣyati //

Yama said:

Since every time you speak so well,
So pleasing, so meaningful of the Law,
My love for you is incomparable—
Choose you a compareless boon, strict woman!

Sāvitrī said:

[33] *aho bata mahat pāpaṃ sāvitryā nṛpate kṛtam / ajānantyā yad anayā guṇavān satyavān vṛtaḥ //* (3:278:11) ... *eko doṣo 'sya nānyo 'sti so 'dya prabhṛti satyavān / saṃvatsareṇa kṣīṇāyur dehanyāsaṃ kariṣyati //* (3:278:22).

[34] *ehi sāvitri gaccha tvam anyaṃ varaya śobhane /* (3:278:23ab) ... *dīrghāyur atha vālpāyuḥ saguṇo nirguṇo 'pi vā / sakṛd vṛto mayā bhartā na dvitīyaṃ vṛṇomy aham //* (3:278:26).

[35] *yathāvidhi samudvāhaṃ kārayām āsatur nṛpau //* (3:279:15cd).

[36] *sāvitryās tu śayānāyās tiṣṭantyāś ca divāniśam / nāradena yad uktaṃ tad vākyaṃ manasi vartate //.*

You make no exception to your favor,
Pride-giver, as in the other boons!
I choose the boon that Satyavat live,
For I am as dead without my lord ...

You have given the boon that a hundred sons
Will be born to me, yet you take my man.
I choose the boon that Satyavat live!
Your very own word shall now come true![37]

And so it came to pass that Sāvitrī saved them all, including her husband's entire lineage (3:283:14).[38]

This 'human' Sāvitrī had not only the beauty of a goddess and the virtues of austerity and right conduct, but far more significantly for us here, the gift of speech. It was through her eloquence rooted in knowledge that she acquired boons, that she saved others, and that she outwitted death itself in the form of Yama. She enchanted him through the power of her speech—one might even say seduced him with her wise words—so that his repeatedly stated resolve not to return Satyavant's life (3:281:25c, 30c, 36c, 43c *vināsya jīvitam*) was ultimately abandoned in face of her persistent eloquence. No matter how many times Yama urged Sāvitrī to turn back (3:281:19a, 25a, 27d, 32d, 38d, 43d, 45d *nivarta*), she continued to speak (3:281:39cd):

tathā vrajann eva giraṃ samudyatāṃ
mayocyamānāṃ śṛṇu bhūya eva ca //

As thou goest thy course do thou listen again
To the ready words I shall speak to thee.[39]

Cleverly she chose her boons, tricking Yama on the fourth one, for, as she herself triumphantly declared (3:281:53), the fulfillment of her wish for a hundred sons by Satyavant required the life of her husband. Her discourses, as she well knew, did not fall on deaf ears. They filled Yama with devoted love for her, until he could no longer resist offering her a compareless, exception-free boon. She whom they called Sāvitrī, for she was given by the goddess Sāvitrī when the latter was pleased with the oblations offered to her with the Sāvitrī/Gāyatrī mantra, embodied Sarasvatī-Vāc as speech and knowledge. Therefore sage Gautama exclaimed (3:282:34cd–35ab):

[37] van Buitenen 1975, pp.772–73.

[38] *evam ātmā pitā mātā śvaśrūḥ śvaśura eva ca / bhartuḥ kulaṃ ca sāvitryā sarvaṃ kṛcchrāt samuddhṛtam //.*

[39] van Buitenen 1975, p.771.

tvāṃ hi jānāmi sāvitri sāvitrīm iva tejasā //

tvam atra hetuṃ jānīṣe ...

I know you, Sāvitrī, you are like Sāvitrī herself in splendid power.

You know the reason behind it all ...[40]

'Human' though she might have been, this Sāvitrī was endowed with divine beauty and the learning and eloquence appropriate to the goddess who presides over them.

2.3 *Epithets*

There are also other names assigned to Sarasvatī, as in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (66:9), in which her eight forms or selves are invoked:

lakṣmīr medhā dharā puṣṭir gaurī tuṣṭiḥ prabhā matiḥ /
etābhiḥ pāhi cāṣṭābhis tanūbhir māṃ sarasvati //

Protect me, Sarasvatī, with these eight forms [of yours]:
Lakṣmī, Medhā, Dharā, Puṣṭi, Gaurī, Tuṣṭi, Prabhā, and Mati.

These eight forms refer largely to deified qualities with which Sarasvatī is endowed: Lakṣmī (fortune), intelligence, forbearance, prosperity; Gaurī (whiteness or brilliance), satisfaction, brilliance, and mental resolve. Lakṣmī and Gaurī alone are goddesses in their own right, which only by interpretation, so as to suit the context, can be taken as embodiments of certain attributes. Therefore at least six of these forms, in being qualities, do not belong to the same category as Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, and the others. This stanza is comparable to a passage in the *Mahābhārata* (9:41:31a–c) where Sarasvatī is also praised in eightfold form: she is prosperity, splendour, glory, success, growth, speech, the invocation word *svāhā*, and also Umā (*puṣṭir dyutis tathā kīrtiḥ siddhir vṛddhir umā tathā / tvam eva vāṇī svāhā tvaṃ*).

2.4 *Sarasvatī's Name Applied to Other Goddesses*

There are also instances in which Sarasvatī's name is assigned to another goddess. In the *Devī Māhātmya*, for instance, the great Goddess (Devī)

[40] van Buitenen 1975, p.777.

is called Sarasvatī (11:22). In the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (9:75–93), Sarasvatī is included amidst particularly lengthy lists of names assigned to Umā in the context of an interesting creation myth, which uses and reassigns some of the elements we saw in the Brahmā-Sarasvatī legend. As the *Vāyu Purāṇa* recounts, when Brahmā's mind-born sons were so unattached to the world that they did not create, Brahmā grew angry. From out of his anger, a person was born (9:71–75). He asked this being, whose body was half male and half female (9:75c *ardhanārīnaravapuḥ*), i.e., Ardhanārīśvara Śiva, to divide himself (9:76). The male half subdivided further, and the Rudras were produced (9:77–80). The female half of Śaṅkara's body, now said to have been born of Brahmā's mouth, consisted of two halves: the right was white, while the left was black (9:82c–83d). Upon Brahmā's request, she separated her white and black parts (9:84). Her many names were Svāhā, Svadhā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Aparṇā, Ekaparṇā, Pāṭalā, Umā, Haimavatī, Ṣaṣṭhī, Kalyāṇī, Khyāti, Prajñā, Mahābhāgā, and Gaurī (9:85–87b). She also had names for her universal forms, as well as names appropriate to the end of the Dvāpara age (9:87c–93).

3. Worship of Sarasvatī

Sarasvatī is worshipped above all for speech, knowledge, and music. Amongst the early Purāṇas, the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and the *Matsya* include rites centering on the goddess.

3.1 *For Speech and Other Ends*

In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* a sacrifice to Sarasvatī as goddess of speech is performed to cure dumbness brought on by a curse (72:22–25).[41] The rite is not described, and only the recitation of hymns addressed to the goddess is mentioned (72:26 *iṣṭiṃ sārasvatīṃ cakre tadarthaṃ sa dvijottamaḥ / sārasvatāni sūktāni jajāpa ca samāhitaḥ //*). A woman

[41] *madarthaṃ tena nāgena sutā śaptā sakhī mama / mūkā bhaviṣyasīty āha sā ca mūkatvam āgatā // tasyāḥ pratikriyāṃ prītyā mama śaknoti ced bhavān / vāgvibhāgapraśāntyarthaṃ tataḥ kiṃ na kṛtaṃ mama // mārkaṇḍeya uvāca / tataḥ sa rājā taṃ vipram āhāsmin kīdṛśī kriyā / tanmūkatāpanodāya sa ca taṃ prāha pārthivam // brāhmaṇa uvāca / bhūpa sārasvatīm iṣṭiṃ karomi vacanāt tava / putrau taveyam ānṛṇyaṃ yātu tadvāk pravartanāt //.*

wishes this sacrifice to be performed for her cursed friend, and a Brahman carries it out on her behalf. Although, as in the Brāhmaṇas, Sarasvatī safeguards speech, removing that which obstructs it, in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* she does so, not for the sake of sacrifice, but for its own sake, in order that the lady's cursed friend may have the faculty of speech. In other words, speech is not a means, but the very end that is sought after through the rite.

An extensive ritual description appears in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, where Sarasvatī is invoked for a whole series of desired ends beginning with sweet speech (*madhurā bhāratī*). When Manu asks how sweet speech is to be attained, and then also worldly prosperity, resolve (*mati*), skill in the sciences, inseparable conjugal union, friendship, and long life (66:1–2),[42] Matsya the Fish incarnation describes the practice (*vrata*) centering on Sarasvatī (66:3).[43] The appropriate day is selected, sages are venerated and fed, and white clothes together with ornaments are given away (66:4a–6b).[44] Then Gāyatrī is worshipped with garlands of white flowers and ointments (66:6d),[45] and invoked as follows (66:7–8):

yathā na devi bhagavān brahmaloke pitāmahaḥ /
tvāṃ parityajya saṃtiṣṭhet tathā bhava varapradā //

vedāḥ śāstrāṇi sarvāṇi gītanṛtyādikaṃ ca yat /
na vihīnaṃ tvayā devi tathā me santu siddhayaḥ //

As, O Goddess, the lord, the grandsire, does not remain in the realm of Brahmā
separated from you, so be a boon-giver.

The Vedas, all the Śāstras, the songs, the dances, etc.
are not separate from you, O Goddess, so may I have successes.[46]

There ensues an iconographic description of the four-armed goddess carrying *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book, amidst further instructions for worship with white flowers and unhusked barley (66:10a–d):

[42] *madhurā bhāratī kena vratena madhusūdana / tathaiva janasaubhāgyaṃ matiṃ vidyāsu kauśalam // abhedaś cāpi dampatyos tathā bandhujanena ca / āyuś ca vipulaṃ puṃsāṃ tan me kathaya mādhava //.*

[43] *samyak pṛṣṭaṃ tvayā rājañ chṛṇu sārasvataṃ vratam / yasya saṃkīrtanād eva tuṣyatīha sarasvatī //.*

[44] *yo yad bhaktaḥ pumān kuryād etad vratam anuttamam / tad vāsarādau sampūjya viprān etān samācaret // athavādityavāreṇa grahatārābalena ca / pāyasaṃ bhojayed viprān kṛtvā brāhmaṇavācanam // śuklavastrāṇi dattvā ca sahiraṇyāni śaktitaḥ /.*

[45] 66:6cd *gāyatrīṃ pūjayed bhaktyā śuklamālyānulepanaiḥ //*. In 66:10c she is worshipped with white flowers and unhusked barley (*śuklapuṣpākṣatair bhaktyā*).

[46] 66:9 describes the eightfold form of the goddess. See p.126 above.

evaṃ sampūjya gāyatrīṃ vīṇākṣamaṇidhāriṇīm /
śuklapuṣpākṣatair bhaktyā sakamaṇḍalupustakām /

The devotee is to maintain a vow of silence while consuming his meals (66:10ef *maunavratena bhuñjīta sāyaṃ prātas tu dharmavit //*) and to worship Brahmavāsinī on the fifth day of both fortnights, offering her a measure of rice together with a vessel filled with clarified butter, and also milk and gold, invoking her with the words: "Gāyatrī, be pleased" (66:11).[47] Vows of silence during *sandhyā* and fasts are to continue for thirteen months (66:12),[48] bringing the *vrata* to a close. Then the devotee should feed and offer gifts to a sage, give away various objects, and worship his teacher (66:13–15).[49] One who thus pays homage to Sarasvatī, we are told, becomes learned and wealthy, acquires a melodious voice, and attains the realm of Brahmā. Even women, it is said, can benefit from this *vrata* (66:16–17).[50]

So the purpose of the *Matsya Purāṇa* Sarasvatī *vrata* is first and foremost sweet speech (66:1ab *madhurā bhāratī kena vratena madhusūdana /*), to which are then added prosperity, resolve, skill in the sciences, conjugal union, friendship, and longevity, thus covering all aspects of life. Three of the desired ends are clearly within the realm of the goddess of speech and learning, for, apart from sweet speech, *mati* is also intelligence (connected with the acquisition of knowledge), and skill

[47] *pañcamyāṃ pratipakṣaṃ ca pūjayed brahmavāsinīm / tathaiva taṇḍulaprasthaṃ ghṛtapātreṇa saṃyutam / kṣīraṃ dadyād dhiraṇyaṃ ca gāyatrī prīyatām iti //.*

[48] *sandhyāyāṃ ca tathā maunam etat kurvan samācaret / nāntarā bhojanaṃ kuryād yāvan māsās trayodaśa //.*

[49] *samāpte tu vrate kuryād bhojanaṃ śuklataṇḍulaiḥ / pūrvaṃ savastrayugmaṃ ca dadyād viprāya bhojanam // devyā vitānaṃ ghaṇṭāṃ ca sitanetre payasvinīm / candanaṃ vastrayugmaṃ ca dadyāc ca śikharaṃ punaḥ // tathopadeṣṭāram api bhaktyā sampūjayed gurum / vittaśāṭhyena rahito vastramālyānulepanaiḥ //.*

[50] *anena vidhinā yas tu kuryāt sārasvataṃ vratam / vidyāvān arthasaṃyukto raktakaṇṭhaś ca jāyate // sarasvatyāḥ prasādena brahmaloke mahīyate / nārī vā kurute yā tu sāpi tatphalagāminī / brahmaloke vased rājan yāvat kalpāyutatrayam //*. A final stanza promises thirty thousand *kalpa* in the city of the Vidyādharas to one who hears or recites this *vrata* (66:18 *sārasvataṃ vrataṃ yas tu śṛṇuyād api yaḥ paṭhet / vidyādharapure so 'pi vaset kalpāyutatrayam //*). A simpler Sarasvatī *vrata* is also mentioned, amidst a list of *vrata* to other gods, in 101:17–18: *sandhyāmaunaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā samānte ghṛtakumbhakam / vastrayugmaṃ tilān ghaṇṭāṃ brāhmaṇāya nivedayet // sārasvataṃ padaṃ yāti punar āvṛttidurlabham / etat sārasvataṃ nāma rūpavidyāpradāyakam //* "The devotee who maintains the vow of silence during *sandhyā* for a year and at the end of it gives a jar of clarified butter, a pair of clothes, sesame seeds, and a bell to a Brahman, goes to the domain of Sarasvatī, which is difficult to attain again if one is in the cycle of rebirth. This is known as Sārasvata [*vrata*]—which gives beauty and learning." This *vrata* may refer back to the one in *Matsya Purāṇa* 66.

in the sciences is knowledge itself. The final stanzas following the description of the observance list the results acquired through it (66:16–17): one becomes learned, wealthy, and sweet-voiced, and attains the realm of Brahmā. In addition to gaining that which is within the goddess's domain (learning and sweet voice), the practitioner obtains wealth and goes to Brahmaloka, the abode of Sarasvatī's spouse. As a *vrata* dedicated to a goddess, it is indeed appropriate that women should also be able to benefit from its performance.

3.2 *For Music*

In the *Matsya Purāṇa*, as we have seen, songs and dances were described as inseparable from Sarasvatī (66:8bc).[51] In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (23) the goddess is worshipped as the supreme *brahman* and asked to grant knowledge in music. The Nāga king Aśvatara, who has lost his brother Kambala, sets out for Plakṣāvataraṇa (Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa), where the Sarasvatī river originates, and there he engages in arduous austerities and praise of the goddess (MkP 23:28–29).[52] He invokes her as the imperishable in whom all things and beings, even the syllable Om, reside (23:32–34).[53] "Undefinable, composed of half a measure, supreme, unchanging, imperishable, celestial, devoid of alteration is this thy other supreme form which I cannot express. And even the mouth does not declare it, nor the tongue, the copper-coloured lip, or other [organs]. Even Indra, the Vasus, Brahmā, the Moon and the Sun, the Light [cannot declare thy form], whose dwelling is the universe, which has the form of the universe; which is the ruler of the universe, the Supreme Ruler ..." (23:39c–42b).[54] Sarasvatī then appears[55] and offers the king a boon, and he chooses

[51] See p.128 above.

[52] *evam uktvā sa nāgendraḥ plakṣāvataraṇaṃ gireḥ / tīrthaṃ himavato gatvā tapas tepe suduścaram // tuṣṭāva gīrbhiś ca tatas tatra devīṃ sarasvatīm / tanmanā niyatāhāro bhūtvā trisavanāplutaḥ //.*

[53] 23:32, 34 *tvam akṣaraṃ paraṃ devi yatra sarvaṃ pratiṣṭhitam / akṣaraṃ paramaṃ devi saṃsthitaṃ paramāṇuvat // ... // tathā tvayi sthitaṃ brahma jagac cedam aśeṣataḥ / oṃkārākṣarasaṃsthānaṃ yat tu devi sthirāsthiram //.*

[54] *anirdeśyaṃ tathā cānyad ardhamātrānvitaṃ param // avikāry akṣayaṃ divyaṃ pariṇāmavivarjitam / tavaitat paramaṃ rūpaṃ yan na śakyaṃ mayoditum // na cāsyena ca taj jihvā tāmrauṣṭhādibhir ucyate / indro 'pi vasavo brahmā candrārkau jyotir eva ca // viśvāvāsaṃ viśvarūpaṃ viśveśaṃ parameśvaram /.* Translation by Pargiter in 1904, p.129.

[55] Although the text does not specifically state that Sarasvatī appears, it does say that she later disappears from the Nāga's view (23:57).

two: the return of his brother Kambala and knowledge of all sounds for them both (23:49–50).[56] "The seven musical notes," the goddess announces, "the seven modes in the musical scale, O most noble Nāga! the seven songs also, and the same number of modulations, so also the forty-nine musical times, and the three octaves—all these thou and also Kambala shalt sing, O sinless one! ... I have not given this to any other on earth or in Pātāla, O Nāga: and ye shall be the teachers of all this in Pātāla and in heaven and on earth also, ye two Nāgas!" (23:51–52, 56).[57] Sarasvatī, the tongue of all, then disappears and the boons are fulfilled, as the king and his brother play the lute. It is not, however, *vīṇā*-playing Sarasvatī whom they invoke with music and song, but Śiva (23:57–59).[58]

4. Iconography of Sarasvatī

4.1 *Four-armed Sarasvatī*

The *Matsya Purāṇa vrata*, as we have seen, provides an iconographic description of Sarasvatī in four-armed form (66:10bd): she carries the *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book.[59] Likewise Brahmāṇī is to be made four-armed, but is said to hold only the rosary and the water pot (MtP 261:24cd–25ab): *brahmāṇī brahmasadṛśī caturvaktrā caturbhujā // haṃsādhirūḍhā kartavyā sākṣasūtrakamaṇḍaluḥ /.* The same list of objects as appears in MtP 66:10bd is also found in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (3:64:2), but with the added specification of which implement is to be held in which hand (3:64:1–2):

[56] *varaṃ te kambalabhrātaḥ prayacchāmy uragādhipa / tad ucyatāṃ pradāsyāmi yat te manasi vartate // aśvatara uvāca / sahāyaṃ dehi devi tvaṃ pūrvaṃ kambalam eva me / samastasvarasambandhum ubhayoḥ samprayaccha ca //.*

[57] *sapta svarā grāmarāgāḥ sapta pannagasattama / gītakāni ca saptaiva tāvatīś cāpi mūrcchanāḥ // tālāś caikonapañcāśat tathā grāmatrayan ca yat / etat sarvaṃ bhavān gātā kambalaś ca tathānagha // ... // tathā nānyasya bhūrloke pātāle cāpi pannaga / praṇetarau bhavantau ca sarvasyāsya bhaviṣyataḥ / pātāle devaloke ca bhūrloke caiva pannagau //.* Translation by Pargiter in 1904, pp.130–32.

[58] *ity uktvā sā tadā devī sarvajihvā sarasvatī / jagāmādarśanaṃ sadyo nāgasya kamalekṣaṇā // tayoś ca tad yathā vṛttaṃ bhrātroḥ sarvam ajāyata / vijñānam ubhayor agryaṃ padatālasvarādikam // tataḥ kailāsaśailendraśikharasthitam īśvaram / gītakaiḥ saptabhir nāgau tantrīlayasamanvitau //.* On the *vīṇā* as a lute, see p.230 below.

[59] See pp.128–29 above. The Nag Publishers' edition of the *Matsya Purāṇa* (1983) has *vāṇīṃ kṣayanivāriṇīm* ("Vāṇī/Speech warding off decay/loss") for 66:10b, which would make her two-armed, holding water pot and book.

devī sarasvatī kāryā sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā /
caturbhujā sā kartavyā tathaiva ca samutthitā //

pustakaṃ cākṣamālāṃ ca tasyā dakṣiṇahastayoḥ /
vāmayoś ca tathā kāryā vaiṇavī ca kamaṇḍaluḥ //

The goddess Sarasvatī is to be made adorned with all ornaments.
She is to be made four-armed and standing.

In her two right hands, the book and the rosary,
and in [her] two left [hands], the *vaiṇavī*[60] is to be made and the water pot.

The *vaiṇavī*, Priyabala Shah explains,[61] is not the flute, but the wooden staff of the *vīṇā*. In *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* 3:73:25, on the other hand, the *vaiṇavī* is replaced with the trident, a traditionally Śaivaite implement: *caturbhujā ca kartavyā tathā devī sarasvatī / akṣamālā triśūlaṃ ca pustakaṃ ca kamaṇḍalu //*. However, the iconographic prescription including the trident is not followed in representations of Sarasvatī.

4.1.1 *Book*

The *pustaka* clearly belongs to the goddess of knowledge and is found in the earliest known image of Sarasvatī from about the third century C.E., as we shall see.[62] The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* says her hands (four in number) represent the Vedas, and her book, all Śāstras (scriptures): *vedās tasya bhujā jñeyāḥ sarvaśāstrāṇi pustakam //* (3:64:3cd).

4.1.2 *Rosary*

The rosary is most commonly called *akṣamālā*, where *akṣa* is the seed or the fruit of the *Terminalia bellerica* tree (*vibhīdaka/vibhītaka*). The rosary is made from the seeds of this tree, strung up into a garland (*mālā*). Whereas in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* Sarasvatī's rosary is referred to as *akṣamālā* (3:64:2a), in the *Matsya Purāṇa* it is called *akṣamaṇi* (66:10b), a necklace of *akṣa*.[63] *Sūtra*, 'thread, string,' is also sometimes used instead of *mālā*, as in MtP 261:25b (*sākṣasūtrakamaṇḍaluḥ*), where Brahmāṇī carries an *akṣasūtra*.

According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, the rosary in Sarasvatī's hand represents time (3:64:4cd): *akṣamālā kare tasyāḥ kāle bhavati pārthiva //*.

[60] Following Priyabala Shah in her edition of Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa. Khaṇḍa *III*, 1958–61, vol.2, p.154.
[61] Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa. Khaṇḍa *III*, 1958–61, vol.2, p.154.
[62] See pp.231–35 below.
[63] Mayrhofer 1996, vol.2, pp.293–94, under '*maṇi*.'

4.1.3 Vīṇā

The *vīṇā* as Sarasvatī's dominant, distinguishing iconographic feature found consistently in her representations to this day is of overwhelming importance. We have already seen the instrument in connection with Vāc in the Brāhmaṇa myth of the Barter for Soma.[64] There, it was the gods who played it to win Speech back from the Gandharvas. In later times, however, it is the Gandharvas as celestial musicians who play the *vīṇā* and sing.[65] Amongst the earlier Purāṇas, Sarasvatī's association with the *vīṇā* appears also in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (72:46cd), where she presents no less than a 'great-sounding great *vīṇā*' (*mahāvīṇā mahāsvanā*) to Skanda.

The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* states that the *vīṇā* is to be known as accomplishment embodied: *siddhir mūrtimatī jñeyā vaiṇavī nātra saṃśayaḥ* / (3:64:5ab). As Priyabala Shah notes,[66] to play the *vīṇā* required great skill.

4.1.4 *Water Pot*

As a water-related river goddess, the water pot is an implement appropriate to Sarasvatī. According to Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, it represents abundance or immortality.[67] The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, on the other hand, tells us the water pot is to be known as the immortal nectar of all scriptures: *sarvaśāstrāmṛtaraso devyā jñeyaḥ kamaṇḍaluḥ* / (3:64:4ab).

4.2 Haṃsa *Mount*

Although nothing is said of Sarasvatī's mount in *Matsya Purāṇa* 66, in 260:40c Brahmā's mount is identified as the *haṃsa* or goose (*haṃsārūḍhaḥ kvacit kāryaḥ*),[68] and therefore it is also assigned to his consort Brahmāṇī (261:24c–25b *brahmāṇī brahmasadṛśī caturvaktrā caturbhujā // haṃsādhirūḍhā kartavyā*). Amongst extant images of Sarasvatī, we find her with *haṃsa* from about the seventh century onwards (figs.11, 16).[69]

[64] See p.79 above.
[65] Hopkins 1915, p.154.
[66] Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa. Khaṇḍa *III*, 1958–61, vol.2, p.154, note 2.
[67] de Mallmann 1963, p.191.
[68] In the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, Brahmā's chariot is drawn by seven geese: *jaṭādharaṃ caturbāhuṃ saptahaṃse rathe sthitam* / (3:44:6b). In the Lecture Hall (*kōdō* 講堂) of Tōji 東寺 in Kyoto, there is an early-ninth-century image of Brahmā on four geese (see Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 1995, fig.3).
[69] See pp.241, 248 below.

Even though the goddess later appears also with a ram and with a peacock,[70] the *haṃsa* is her most common mount.

The word *haṃsa* is often erroneously translated as 'swan,' for the goose generally tends to be perceived as devoid of all elegance and intelligence, the very model of silliness and stupidity. As Jean Philippe Vogel explains,[71] the ordinary greyish brown and white goose found in India (*Anser indicus*) is a bird of passage which "lives in India from October to April and breeds on the lakes of Tibet and Central Asia." The Latin word *anser*, it should be noted, is clearly related to the Sanskrit *haṃsa*. The white goose is called *rājahaṃsa* 'royal goose,' and it is this white goose which is Sarasvatī's mount. Not only is its gait described as graceful,[72] but its voice is also said to be charming.[73]

Although the *haṃsa* is best known for its ability to separate milk from water, the original connection may have been with Soma rather than with milk.[74] In the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, the *ātman* (Self) is described as a *haṃsa* (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 14:7:1:12–13 [= *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4:3:11–12]):

svápnena śārīrám abhipraháty[a
á]suptaḥ suptā́n abhí cākaśīti /
śukrám ādā́ya púnar áiti sthā́naṁ
hiraṇmáyaḥ pauruṣá ekahaṁsáḥ //

prāṇéna rákṣann áparaṃ kulāyáṃ
bahíṣ kulāyā́d amṛ́taś caritvā́ /
sá īyate amṛ́to yatrakā́mam
hiraṇmáyaḥ pauruṣá ekahaṁsáḥ //

Subduing by sleep the bodily realm,
remaining awake, he contemplates the sleeping senses.
Taking the light, he returns to his place—
the golden person, the single goose!

Guarding by breath the lower nest,
the immortal roams outside the nest;

[70] See K. Bhattacharyya 1983, figs.VIII (ram) and XX (peacock), for instance. On the peacock mount of the Jain Sarasvatī, see p.248, note 103 below.

[71] Vogel 1962, p.2.

[72] *Manu Smṛti* 3:10 *avyaṅgāṅgīṃ saumyanāmnīṃ haṃsavāraṇagāminīm* // "He [a man] should marry a woman who does not lack any part of her body and who has a pleasant name, who walks like a goose or an elephant ..." (Doniger and Smith 1991, p.44.)

[73] Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* says that Rāma speaks with the voice of an enamoured *haṃsa* (2:112:15).

[74] See, for instance, *Ṛg Veda* 4:45:4, 5:78:1–3, 8:35:8; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 19:74. See also Sprockhoff's discussion of this ability (1976, pp.86–88).

the immortal goes wherever he wants—
the golden person, the single goose![75]

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the migrating *haṃsa* is in one passage the *ātman* (6:15),[76] and in another the transmigrating individual soul who through discrimination attains immortality (1:6).[77]

In connection with Sarasvatī, the *haṃsa* is indeed an appropriate mount, not only because it is her spouse's mount, but also because she is goddess of knowledge, which requires discrimination, like separation of milk from water. In her riverine aspect, furthermore, she is linked with the *haṃsa* in association with water, for the goose dwells in lakes and ponds.

4.3 *With Brahmā*

When texts prescribe that Brahmā is to have Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī by his side, Sarasvatī is on his right and Sāvitrī on his left: *vāmapārśve 'sya sāvitrīṃ dakṣiṇe ca sarasvatīm* // (MtP 260:44cd).

[75] Translation of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4:3:11–12 by Patrick Olivelle in 1996, p.59; 1998, p.113.

[76] *eko haṃso bhuvanasyāsya madhye sa evāgniḥ salile saṃniviṣṭaḥ / tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya* // "He is the one goose in the middle of this universe. He himself resides as fire within the ocean. Only when man knows him does he pass beyond death; there is no other path for getting there." (Olivelle 1996, p.264; 1998, p.433.)

[77] *sarvājīve sarvasaṃsthe bṛhante tasmin haṃso bhrāmyate brahmacakre / pṛthag ātmānaṃ preritāraṃ ca matvā juṣṭas tatas tenāmṛtatvam eti* // "Within this vast wheel of *brahman*, on which all subsist and which abides in all, a goose keeps moving around. When he perceives himself (*ātman*) as distinct from the impeller, delighted by that knowledge he goes from there to immortality." (Olivelle 1996, p.253; 1998, p.415.) On *haṃsa* and *paramahaṃsa*, see Sprockhoff 1976, pp.82ff.

EPIC AND PURANIC SARASVATĪ IN RETROSPECTIVE

In the *Mahābhārata* and the early Purāṇas, the Sarasvatī-related changes may be summarized under the following categories: geography, religious practice, functions, and depiction.[1]

1. Geography

In contrast with the *Ṛg Veda* description of a powerful flooding river, the *Mahābhārata* depicts a calmer-flowing Sarasvatī. As in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, she arises at Plakṣa [Prāsravaṇa] and disappears in the sands at Vinaśana. She reemerges, however, at sites including Camasodbheda, and, flowing underground, eventually empties into the sea at Prabhāsa. In the expanded geography of the epic, therefore, the Sarasvatī debouches in the ocean, as she did in the *Ṛg Veda*. The *Mahābhārata* thereby recalls the Ṛg-Vedic greatness of the Sarasvatī river, recreating, through its mythologized geography, a past that is no more.

Various rivers are also identified as Sarasvatī in allusion to her Ṛg-Vedic epithet *saptásvasar*. In fact, like the Āpas, of whom she appeared as the representative in the *Ṛg Veda*, "all rivers are Sarasvatī-s," tells us the *Mahābhārata* (12:255:39a *sarvā nadyaḥ sarasvatyaḥ*).

Her geography is not only made to look like her Vedic descriptions in expanded form, but it is also endowed with a purpose reflecting the central concern of the epic: Dharma. In fact, the means of rendering her geography Dharmic is through a kind of interpretive 'vedicization.' The *Mahābhārata* describes the Sarasvatī's course in vocabulary and perimeters reminiscent of Vedic texts, and then accounts for it in mythic terms intended to convey that it is determined by Dharma. The stories around her geography indeed function as instructions in Dharma. To avoid the unrighteous Niṣādas, she enters the earth, and for the sake of the twice-born Naimiṣeya seers, she changes her course. Appropriate to the riverine goddess of knowledge, the flow of her waters is the flow of Dharma,

[1] See also the table, From the Vedas to the Early Purāṇas, on pp.140–41 below.

which pilgrims and sacrificers along her banks not only hear about in myths, but actually behold concretely.

2. Religious Practice

There are countless *tīrtha* along the banks of the Sarasvatī, we are told, which are populated by huge numbers of sages performing sacrifices, and also by pilgrims. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*'s description of sacrificial sessions carried out at various stages along the Sarasvatī, from Vinaśana to Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa, is recast in the epic in the form of a vastly expanded pilgrimage, including also elaborate myths woven around the many *tīrtha* on Sarasvatī's banks. Reflecting a shift from complex, costly sacrifices to the simpler, devotional practice of visiting sacred places, the merit acquired from pilgrimage to these sites is often explained in terms of its Vedic ritual equivalent. This transition in the religious observances represents also a change in the identity of the performers themselves: while Vedic sacrifices were carried out by Brahmans on behalf of other twice-born, many of the acts of worship described and advocated by the epics and the Purāṇas were open virtually to anyone—even to women, as we have seen. Changes in religious practices and consequently in their performers were in fact necessary, given the intended audiences of the respective texts. While the Vedas were accessible only to the twice-born, the epics and the Purāṇas were addressed to the widest possible public.

Despite a shift away from Vedic ritualism and its accompanying restrictiveness, the epic pilgrimage along the Sarasvatī, like the geography of the river, is filled with Vedic referents. Not only is the Sarasvatī pilgrimage derived from the Vedic practice of *yātsattra*, but the myths recounted at the various *tīrtha* are also wrapped up in Vedic allusions. The Saptasārasvata Tīrtha myth, for instance, recalls Sarasvatī's Ṛg-Vedic epithet *saptásvasar*, for it is here that seven rivers, Sarasvatī under seven different names, converge. The *Ṛg Veda*, furthermore, already contains indications of the antagonism between the seers Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. As Hiltebeitel contends, the epic's "frame stories link with other conventions and allusions ... to make the whole appear Vedic."[2] It is these very Vedic references that lend the text authority.

[2] Hiltebeitel 2001, p.131, note 2.

Rites centering on Sarasvatī as a goddess, rather than as a river, appear in the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and the *Matsya Purāṇa*. The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* includes two instances: a largely undescribed sacrifice to Sarasvatī is performed to cure dumbness brought on by a curse, and the goddess is worshipped to grant knowledge in music. An extensive ritual description appears in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, where Sarasvatī is invoked for a whole series of desired ends beginning with sweet speech. Even women, we are told, can benefit from this last *vrata*.

3. Functions

While in the Brāhmaṇas Sarasvatī governed over knowledge because she was Speech, in the epics and the Purāṇas she presides over speech and knowledge because she is Sarasvatī. In this final step in the process of identification of Sarasvatī and Vāc, speech is simply a function of Sarasvatī.

In curing dumbness and providing sweet speech, she safeguards and promotes speech, as in the Brāhmaṇas, removing obstacles to it. She does this, however, not for the sake of sacrifice, but rather for its own sake, so that an individual may have the faculty of, and skill in, speech. That which in the Brāhmaṇas was a means for the effective performance of sacrifice is here the very goal of the sacrifice.

Vāc's undeveloped Brāhmaṇa connection with music and the *vīṇā*, furthermore, is transferred to Sarasvatī and bears fruit in the Purāṇas: in the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, Sarasvatī is worshipped to obtain full knowledge of music, and in the *Vāyu*, very significantly she provides Skanda with a *vīṇā*. Sarasvatī, therefore, reigns over speech, knowledge, and music.

4. Depiction

In the *Mahābhārata*, Sarasvatī is depicted in human-like form and disposition, as a frightened and confused woman, and with newly found relations to other gods and mortals. Her manifestation in human shape has Brahmanical precedent by way of Vāc, who materialized as an attractively attired, passionate woman already in the *Ṛg Veda* and who as a beautiful female was bartered off for Soma in the Brāhmaṇas. The humanization of Sarasvatī's appearance in the epic and the Purāṇas occurred in, and undoubtedly owes something to, the context of the rise of

the popular *avatāra* ideology, in which gods incarnate in human, animal, and fish forms. It reflects, furthermore, the increasing pan-Indian tendencies of the time, of making human-like images of deities of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain pantheons. While epic appearances of Sarasvatī as a woman may have contributed in setting the stage for the creation of the goddess's representations, it is also possible, as I have noted, that no longer extant images of Sarasvatī already existed, and hence, conversely, might have inspired her human-like manifestations in the epic.

In the myth of the Carrying Away of Vasiṣṭha at Sthāṇu Tīrtha, Sarasvatī is presented not only in human form, but also with a profoundly human, frightened, and confused disposition, which the authors of the epic may have considered particularly appropriate to a woman, especially in the face of the powerful *tapas* of the sages. Like Vāc in the Brāhmaṇa myth of the Barter for Soma, where women "are connected with deceptive things," Sarasvatī makes bad decisions, in this case not because of desire, but because of fear. This is, unfortunately, in no way flattering to the goddess of knowledge, who has here lost her vital sense of discrimination.

Sarasvatī also acquires various relations in the epic and the Purāṇas. In the *Mahābhārata*, she becomes the daughter of Brahmā, the wife of Manu and of sage Matināra, and the mother of Taṃsu and Sārasvata. Her son Sārasvata, it will be remembered, is nothing but a reflection of her, in a context where a male teacher of the all-male seers is considered more appropriate than a female. Her relationship with Brahmā is fully elaborated into a myth in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, based on the Brāhmaṇa accounts of Prajāpati and his daughter/consort Vāc, for Prajāpati becomes Brahmā and Vāc becomes Sarasvatī, known also as Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, Brahmāṇī, and numerous other names.

The Purāṇas also provide the first iconographic descriptions of Sarasvatī. In later portions of the *Matsya Purāṇa*, and then again in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, she is portrayed as four-armed, carrying *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book. Her usual mount, the *haṃsa*, is attributed both to her spouse Brahmā and to Brahmāṇī. These iconographic depictions, since they were outlined and repeated, were clearly intended to be followed, and it is possible that no longer extant early images of Sarasvatī were modelled on them. However, as we shall see in Chapter Eleven, none of the early surviving representations of the goddess corresponds to the *Matsya Purāṇa* iconography.

FROM THE VEDAS TO THE EARLY PURĀṆAS

	RIVER	GODDESS	SACRIFICE	SPEECH	KNOWLEDGE	MUSIC	NAMES	FORM	RELATIONS
RV after 1750 B.C.E.	powerful river	powerful goddess	sacrifices on riverbanks	presides over *dhī́*					
AV 12th c. B.C.E.		assists in worldly matters	Three Sarasvatī	associated and identified with speech					
YV 12th–9th c. B.C.E.		healer	Sautrāmaṇī ritual, ewe offering	associated and identified with speech					mother and consort of Indra
Brāhmaṇas 900–500 B.C.E.	river		sacrificial sessions along river	identified with speech	speech = Vedas = knowledge	Speech connected with music, *vīṇā*			Speech as daughter / consort of Prajāpati
Mbh mid-2nd c. B.C.E. – 0 C.E.	calmer river, river pilgrimage, *tīrtha* mythology	humanized	sacrifices on riverbanks		goddess of knowledge		another Sāvitrī		daughter of Brahmā, wife, mother
MkP 3rd c. C.E.			sacrifice for speech						
3rd–6th c. C.E.			worship for music		goddess of knowledge	teaches music			
MtP 3rd–4th c. C.E.					goddess of knowledge		Sāvitrī, Gāyatrī, Brahmāṇī		daughter / consort of Brahmā
550–650 C.E.			sacrifice for speech, knowledge, etc.				Lakṣmī, Gaurī, epithets	4-armed: *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, book; mount: *haṃsa*	
VāyuP 4th–5th c. C.E.						gives *vīṇā* to Skanda			
VdP 400–1000 C.E.					goddess of knowledge			4-armed: *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, book; symbolism	

PART THREE

BUDDHIST SARASVATĪ

SARASVATĪ IN BUDDHIST SUTRAS

Sarasvatī's name is mentioned in few pre-eighth- and eighth-century Chinese versions of Buddhist sutras. Amongst material known to be extant, her earliest appearance is in 417, in the first Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* (*Suvarṇabhāsa* or *Suvarṇabhāsottama Sūtra*).[1] The Sanskrit text on which it was based is not the existing one, but an earlier version that no longer survives. The sutra, in the extant Sanskrit and in its numerous translations, includes an entire chapter (*parivarta*) dedicated to Sarasvatī. It is, in fact, the most important source for the early Buddhist Sarasvatī.

Other sutras that have subsisted only in translation have, as far as I am aware, a great deal less to say on her.[2] Considering this material to be very marginal to the present discourse, I have chosen not to take it up in this study. Instead, I have focused on the *Sutra of Golden Light*, where Sarasvatī appears most prominently and most early on. This text, highly influential throughout Buddhist Asia, has had a particularly complicated history, and therefore requires a fuller introduction, to which Chapter Seven is dedicated.

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[1] *Rāja* is sometimes appended to the title (*Suvarṇabhāsottamarāja Sūtra*), as in the corresponding Chinese title of Yijing's early eighth-century translation (see p.149 below). There was also a change of title to *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama*, which appears in its Tibetan version already in the first Tibetan translation of the eighth century. For a discussion of the title of the sutra, see the introduction (pp.XI–XII) to Nobel's 1937 edition of the Sanskrit text (Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra. *Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna Buddhismus*).

[2] Based on a computer search of the electronic Taishō edition of the Buddhist Canon for the various characters used for her name.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUTRA OF GOLDEN LIGHT

1. THE SUTRA

1.1 *Growth of the Text*

The *Sutra of Golden Light* would have existed in some form already in the first century C.E. Johannes Nobel (1887–1960), who spent much of his life unravelling the intricacies of its passages in its numerous translations and renditions, demonstrated that the text evolved from the chapter on confession (chapter 3).[1] In Nobel's edition of the Sanskrit text that has come down to us, we read:

> *atha khalu ruciraketur bodhisattvaḥ suptaḥ / svapnāntaragataḥ suvarṇāṃ suvarṇamayikāṃ bherīm adrākṣīt / samantāvabhāsamānām / tadyathāpi nāma sūryamaṇḍalam ... tatra ca brāhmaṇarūpeṇa puruṣam adrākṣīt / tāṃ bherīṃ parāhanantaṃ tatra bherīśabdād imā evaṃrūpā deśanāgāthā niścaramāṇā aśrauṣīt // atha khalu ruciraketur bodhisattvaḥ prativibuddhaḥ samānas tā dharmadeśanāgāthā anusmarati sma /*

> Then indeed the Bodhisattva Ruciraketu slept. In the middle of his sleep he saw a golden drum, made of gold, shining everywhere just like the orb of the sun ... And there he saw a man with the form of a brahmin, beating that drum. There from the sound of the drum he heard these (and) similar confessional verses coming forth. (21) Then indeed the Bodhisattva Ruciraketu, as soon as he awoke, recollected these verses of confession of the Law.[2]

The practice of confession of sins in Buddhism can be traced back to the earliest period, within the lifetime of the Buddha. During the *poṣadha* (Pali *uposatha*), held every fortnight, monks would recite the Vinaya rules (the *prātimokṣa*) and confess their transgressions.[3] Confessions were

[1] See Nobel's introduction to his edition of the extant Sanskrit version of the sutra (Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra. *Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna Buddhismus*, 1937), pp.XXX, XXXIV, XL, XLVII.

[2] Translation by Ronald E. Emmerick in 1996, pp.8–9. The bracketed number in Emmerick's translation refers to the corresponding page in Nobel's 1937 edition of the Sanskrit. All references to the extant Sanskrit text herein are to Nobel's edition.

[3] Gombrich 1988, pp.108–10; Warder 1970, p.58.

also made throughout the rainy season (*varṣa*), but especially on the final day of this three-month retreat period. Rites of confession gradually developed into much more than acknowledgment of breach of monastic rules. Even the above passage refers to something more than confession, as expressed in what follows it: the verses coming forth from the golden drum are first and foremost a wishful prayer for the removal of suffering of all sentient beings, and only afterwards do they turn into a confession.[4] This confession is then identified as the 'splendid, excellent Golden Light' (*suvarṇabhāsottamā śubhā*),[5] after which the sutra is named.

To this confession, Nobel explains,[6] chapter 6 was then added, where the Four Great Kings (*caturmahārāja*) prophesy the continued reign and prosperity of the ruler who upholds the sutra.[7] The great importance acquired by this sutra for the protection of the state derives from this prognostication. Then came chapters 7–11, where various deities, including our Sarasvatī (chapter 7), promise, following the Four Great Kings in chapter 6, to uphold the sutra, its preachers, and their audiences, listing the great many benefits that will accrue to them. Chapter 13 about king Susambhava's visit to a monk to hear an exposition of the sutra and to have his wishes fulfilled was later still. Chapter 14 is a conclusion to chapters 1–13, advising people to listen to the preaching of the text and enumerating the merits thereof. In its older version, the *Sutra of Golden Light* would have ended here. Another five, rather differently composed chapters (15–19) were gradually added to form the text as it has come down to us. This surviving Sanskrit version, according to Nobel, cannot be dated earlier than the middle of the fifth century.

1.2 *Extant Text and Translations*

The extant Sanskrit text of the *Suvarṇabhāsottama Sūtra* was edited by Johannes Nobel in 1937 and translated into English by Ronald E. Emmerick in 1970, who then corrected and revised his translation in 1990, 1992, and 1996.[8] A new edition of the Sanskrit is being prepared

[4] Sanskrit, pp.22ff. (Emmerick 1996, pp.9ff.).

[5] Sanskrit, p.29 (Emmerick 1996, p.12).

[6] For a detailed discussion of the growth of the text, see Nobel's introduction to his 1937 edition of the Sanskrit, pp.XLIIff.

[7] Sanskrit, pp.64ff. (Emmerick 1996, pp.24ff.).

[8] All references to Emmerick herein are to the third (revised) translation of 1996.

by P. O. Skjærvø, for which he uses a Nepalese manuscript that was not available to Nobel.

Numerous translations of the *Sutra of Golden Light* reveal the importance of this text and the existence of different versions of it.[9] In addition to Chinese and Tibetan renderings, there are Khotanese, Sogdian, Xi Xia (Tangut), Mongolian, and Old Uighur translations that have come down to us either in whole or in part. The Chinese renderings are especially significant to the study of the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī because they are of an earlier date than most surviving versions in other languages. Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation introduced below is even older than the extant Sanskrit. The three Chinese renderings of the sutra found in the Taishō edition of the Buddhist Canon (see below) reflect not only different stages or different versions in the development of the Sanskrit original, but also, within the Sarasvatī chapter, the evolving conceptualization of the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī. There are no other known surviving translations of the sutra that would provide us with so much valuable information on the early Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī in her successive stages of development. I will, therefore, take up these Chinese renditions here, alongside with the extant Sanskrit version of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

The Taishō edition of the Buddhist Canon includes the following three Chinese renderings of the sutra:[10]

1. Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖; 385–433 or 436) translation: *Jinguangming jing* 金光明經 in 4 fascs. (T. vol.16, no.663), appeared in 417.[11] This translation is based on an earlier Sanskrit version of the sutra than the extant version edited by Nobel in 1937. The chapter on Sarasvatī is entitled "Da Biantianshen *pin*" 大辯天神品 (pp.344c20–345a3).

[9] For recent scholarship on the *Sutra of Golden Light*, see, for instance, Kanaoka 1980, Gummer 2000, Karashima and Jiang 2003, and Ludvik 2006.

[10] Note, however, that until 730 there were five Chinese versions that were considered canonical. See Ludvik 2006, Appendix A. On the translation process in China, see, for instance, Kenneth Ch'en 1960, Tang 1992, and Boucher 1998.

[11] *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集, T. vol.55, no.2145, p.11b17. For the date, see note 12 of the same page of the Taishō edition, where we read that the Song, Yuan, and Ming editions of the Buddhist Canon specify that Dharmakṣema's translation appeared in the fifth month of the sixth year Xuanshi 玄始, that is, between June 1–29, 417. Chen Jinhua (2004), however, discusses the issue of Dharmakṣema's arrival in the Northern Liang (r. 397–439) capital of Guzang 姑藏 (present-day Wuwei 武威, Gansu), and in this connection calls into question the date of 417 for Dharmakṣema's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

2. Baogui 寶貴 edition: *Hebu Jinguangming jing* 合部金光明經 in 8 fascs. (T. vol.16, no.664), edited by Baogui in 597,[12] and including the translations of Dharmakṣema from 417, of Paramārtha (Boluomotuo 波羅末陀; 500–69) from 552,[13] and of Yaśogupta (Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多; d.u.) and Jñānagupta (Shenajueduo 闍那崛多; 523–600) from 561–78.[14] The chapter dedicated to Sarasvatī is entitled "Da Biantian *pin*" 大辯天品 (pp.386b22–388a7). Dharmakṣema's translation is reproduced, with a small number of minor differences, in the first 11 lines of the chapter (p.386b24–c5), and then followed (pp.386c6–388a7) by the translation of Yaśogupta and Jñānagupta. The chapter as it stands in Baogui's edition corresponds more closely to the extant Sanskrit than Yijing's considerably more elaborate version.
3. Yijing 義淨 (635–713) translation: *Jinguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經 in 10 fascs. (T. vol.16, no.665), completed in 703.[15] The chapter dedicated to Sarasvatī is called "Da Biancai tiannü *pin*" 大辯才天女品 (pp.434b25–438c23). Nobel translated Yijing's entire version into German in 1958 (under 1958a in Bibliography B.).

Two Tibetan translations were made from the Sanskrit in the eighth (Tib. I) and ninth (Tib. II) centuries.[16] Tib. I, unattributed but quite possibly made by Mūlaśoka and Jñānakumāra during the first half of the eighth century, corresponds quite closely to the extant Sanskrit. The early ninth-century Tib. II, made by Jinamitra, Śilendrabodhi, and Ye shes sde, is considered to be a later, and much more extensive, version of Tib.I.[17]

[12] *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教録, T. vol.55, no.2154, p.548b26–27.

[13] *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記, T. vol.49, no.2034, p.98c22–23.

[14] The preface of the *Hebu Jinguangming jing* states (p.359b21) that this translation by Yaśogupta and Jñānagupta was done during the [Northern] Zhou (557–81). Fei Zhangfang 費長房, in 597, specifies that the translation was made in the reign of Wudi (561–78) of the [Northern] Zhou (*Lidai sanbao ji*, p.100b24–25, c3–5; see also *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*, p.545a18–19, 25). However, in an interlinear note on p.386c6, Baogui indicates that what follows is Jñānagupta's translation. This might be misleading because we know that Jñānagupta worked on this Chinese rendering together with Yaśogupta. It is probable that Baogui omitted Yaśogupta's name here only for brevity's sake.

[15] See the colophon of the sutra discovered in Dunhuang reproduced in Forte 2005, pl.XXXIV. On Yijing's translation team, see Ludvik 2006, pp.13–14.

[16] Nobel has also edited the Tibetan translations: Tib. I and Tib. II are to be found in Nobel 1944, and Tib. III in Nobel 1958b.

[17] Emmerick 1996, p.xii; Gummer 2000, pp.26–27. On additional Tibetan versions, see Oetke 1977.

Khotanese renditions survive in numerous fragments which indicate that several different Khotanese translations were made, probably between the fifth and tenth centuries.[18] Skjærvø's catalogue of the *Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in The British Library* includes texts and translations of extant fragments of the sutra.[19]

Yijing's rendition turned out to be of major importance. It was, in turn, translated into Tibetan, Sogdian, Xi Xia, and Old Uighur.[20] Besides the above two Tibetan translations from Sanskrit, we have an early ninth-century Tibetan rendering from Yijing's Chinese attributed to Chos Grub (Tib. III).

My study of the Sarasvatī chapter in the *Sutra of Golden Light* will be based on the extant Sanskrit and on the immensely valuable Chinese translations.

2. Preaching of the Sutra in India

Chinese sources refer to the preaching of the *Sutra of Golden Light* in India. It is mentioned in Huijiao's 慧皎 (497–554) *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳), completed in ca. 530, in the biography of the first-century monk She Moteng 攝摩騰 (Kāśyapa Mātaṅga?) from central India. Kāśyapa Mātaṅga, we are told, went to a small kingdom of India to preach the *Sutra of Golden Light* (金光明經). As it was under attack by an enemy kingdom, however, he questioned the use of expounding the text there: although the sutra says that the Earth Deity protects one who can explain this sutra Dharma and assures the safety and happiness of his residence (經云。能說此經法。為地神所護。使所居安樂。), war had already begun. Nevertheless, putting concerns for himself aside, Kāśyapa Mātaṅga went to them to counsel peace, and, as a result, the two kingdoms were reconciled.[21]

[18] Skjærvø 2002, pp.lxxiii–lxxiv; Gummer 2000, p.28. There is a forthcoming transcription, edition, and translation of these numerous Khotanese fragments by Skjærvø, entitled *The Khotanese Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*.

[19] See Skjærvø 2002.

[20] Nobel, in the introduction to his 1937 edition of the Sanskrit (p.XXVI), thought the Uighur version was based rather on the Tibetan translation from Yijing's Chinese.

[21] T. vol.50, no.2059, p.322c13–17. Translated into French by Robert Shih in 1968, p.1. There is also a short note about Kāśyapa Mātaṅga's translation of the *Sutra of the Forty-two Articles* (*Sishierzhang jing* 四十二章經) in Sengyou's 僧祐 (445–518) *Chu sanzang ji ji* (T. vol.55, no.2145, p.81c5ff.) completed in 515 and revised by the author before his death, and hence roughly contemporary with the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*. However, there is no mention here of his preaching of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

Fei Zhangfang's *Lidai sanbao ji*, completed in 598,[22] also mentions the *Sutra of Golden Light* (T. vol.49, no.2034, p.49c19) in the entry on Kāśyapa Mātaṅga's Chinese translation of the *Sutra of the Forty-two Articles* (pp.49c9–50a4). A small country in northwest India, where the people honoured the *Sutra of the Forty-two Articles*, was constantly threatened with assault from a neighbouring country. Yet, whenever the neighbouring forces were about to attack, an obstacle presented itself, preventing them from doing so. It was therefore believed that the small country had some special techniques. And so, in order to find out this matter, a spy was sent. Upon his return, the man reported:

> 彼國君臣講習大乘金光明等經。經言。說此法地神王護之。
>
> The sovereign and the officials of this country preach and study Mahāyāna sutras, such as the *Sutra of Golden Light*. The sutra says: "By preaching this Dharma, the Earth Deity King will protect it [i.e., the country]." (p.49c18–20)

The neighbouring country then called a truce and turned to the promulgation of Mahāyāna. From there, we are told, [Mahāyāna] spread to southern India and gradually to China.

According to these sources, then, the *Sutra of Golden Light* was preached somewhere in the northwestern part of India already during the first century. If this were indeed correct, it would be particularly important for us, as we have no extant records of it in India. She Moteng, however, is a legendary figure whose historicity has not been proved. All that concerns him, therefore, must be taken very cautiously. It may well be, as Antonino Forte pointed out, that these passages have more to do with the pacifistic Buddhist propaganda in the Chinese historical context of the sixth century, than with the Indian context of the first century.[23]

What is clear from these Chinese sources is the protective function of the sutra and its importance in maintaining peace. According to the *Biographies of Eminent Monks*, one who expounds the sutra is safeguarded by the Earth Deity. His preaching of this text, furthermore, succeeds in bringing about peace between warring countries: whereas a continuing battle would cause destruction and instability on both sides, the expounding of the sutra results in peace, stability, and hence protection of both

[22] On the date of the *Lidai sanbao ji*, see Chen Jinhua 2002, p.18, note 21.

[23] Personal communication.

realms. According to the *Lidai sanbao ji*, a country where rulers and officials preached and studied Mahāyāna texts, notably the *Sutra of Golden Light*, was consequently impervious to attacks from outside, for sutra-study leads to the safety of the country through the Earth Deity King.

While sutras generally claim to provide their readers, expounders, and auditors all kinds of benefits, including protection in one form or other, the *Sutra of Golden Light* specializes in safe-keeping of the state. This is not to say that our sutra is intended only for kings, but rather that the composers/compilers/editors of the *Sutra of Golden Light* were well aware that its spread and diffusion, not to mention its survival, would be greatly enhanced through the promotion of the text by rulers. As noted above, in the sutra the Four Great Kings—rather than the Earth Deity mentioned in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* and in the *Lidai sanbao ji*—prophesy the continued reign and prosperity of the ruler who upholds the *Sutra of Golden Light*. This sutra is, in fact, one of the principal Buddhist texts for the protection of the nation, most notably upheld in Japan for state support from the eighth century onwards.[24] We know less about the *Sutra of Golden Light* in China, but as China was the model followed in Japan at the time, we can presume that this text certainly had political significance in China as well. As for the Indian situation, we know nothing at all of the use of the *Sutra of Golden Light* by rulers. The only mention of the sutra's preaching and of its protective benefits, as we have just seen, appears in the Chinese biography of the semi-legendary monk Kāśyapa Mātaṅga, but the value of this biography may not be very relevant to the Indian context.

It is clear that the chapter of the Four Great Kings safeguarding the country where the sutra is upheld was written with the support of rulers in mind. In terms of time period, since Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation appeared in 417 and already contained the prophecy of the Four Great Kings, the sovereigns to whom this text may have been addressed can be placed in a period preceding the year 417. If the sutra did in fact exist in some form in as early as the first century, the Four Great Kings may not yet have had any role in the text at the time.[25] If so, it may be

[24] For the sutras dealing with protection of the state see "Chingokokka" by Jacques May in Hōbōgirin 1929–2003, fasc.IV, pp.322–27. For the *Sutra of the Humane Kings*, see Orzech 1998.

[25] Although the sixth-century Chinese biographical accounts of Kāśyapa Mātaṅga cannot be taken as historically reliable, the appearance of the Earth Deity—rather than

said, at best, that the historical rulers addressed by the sutra belonged to a period from probably after the first century to the very early fifth century.

According to Nobel, the earliest known version of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, represented by Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation, may have been compiled for a ruling family known as Ruciraketu, whose name appears the most frequently in the sutra.[26] Based on the verses of chapter 12 (Instruction concerning Divine Kings), the genealogy of this family reads: Varendraketu, Balendraketu, Ruciraketu, and his two sons Rūpyaketu and Rūpyaprabha.[27] The real name(s) of the historical ruler(s) for whom the sutra was intended, however, was (were) presumably not used in the sutra itself; Ruciraketu and the other names might allude to someone, or represent a certain sovereign house.[28] An inquiry into which specific ruler(s) the text may have been intended for, similar to the studies of the *Mahāmegha Sūtra* initiated by Sylvain Lévi,[29] would be fascinating indeed, but it would take us too far afield from our central concern with the goddess Sarasvatī.

There is nothing unusual, it should be noted, in the involvement of monks in politics. While, as far as I am aware, nothing is known of the implication of the monks connected with the *Sutra of Golden Light* in the Indian political scene, in China monks often played a considerable role in the affairs of state.[30] The same Yijing who translated our sutra into Chinese in 703 was appointed, after his return from India and Southeast Asia in 695, to the Great Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺, the most powerful dynastic monastery at the time. As Forte notes, his assignment, amongst other factors, reveals his political involvement with Empress Wu.[31]

the Four Great Kings— as protective agent is surprising, especially since Dharmakṣema's translation was already available (not to mention other Chinese renderings underway in the sixth century). Whether or not the Chinese biographies could be pointing to an earlier version of the sutra is a complex, likely unresolvable, question, beyond the scope of this study.

[26] *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, Nobel's edition of 1937, p.XLVII.

[27] Ibid., p.XXXVIII.

[28] Usually, instead of real names, allusive or similar names were given. Prophecies required more or less skillful interpretations by people who intended to apply them. See the case of Jingguang and the other protagonists as interpreted in the *Commentary on the Mahāmegha Sūtra* (Forte 2005, pp.261ff.) or in the interpolation in the *Ratnamegha Sūtra* (ibid., pp.194ff.).

[29] Lévi 1936. See especially Forte 2005.

[30] See, for instance, the role played by the monks of the Palace Chapel in Luoyang and their use of the *Mahāmegha Sūtra* (Forte 2005).

[31] Forte 2001. The subject of Yijing's political involvement is also touched on in T. H. Barrett 1998.

3. The Sarasvatī Chapter

The Sarasvatī chapter in the extant Sanskrit, in Baogui's edition, and in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, can be divided into three sequential parts, each of which presents the goddess in a different aspect: in the first part Sarasvatī appears as a deity of eloquence; in the second she teaches a ritual herbal/medicinal bath; and in the third she is invoked by the Brahman Kauṇḍinya as a battle goddess. It is to this threefold division that I shall resort in my discussion of the representation of Sarasvatī in the sutra, so as to elucidate the developing conceptualization of the Buddhist Sarasvatī in India as reflected in the sutra and its Chinese translations.

Dharmakṣema's version of the chapter, which consists of twelve lines, includes only the first of these three parts, and hence depicts her as goddess of eloquence. As mentioned above, the Sanskrit text Dharmakṣema was working with represents an earlier form of the sutra than we find in Nobel's edition of the Sanskrit. Dharmakṣema's translation, furthermore, is reproduced in Baogui's edition and finds its closely corresponding passages in the extant Sanskrit and in Yijing's more developed version. Dharmakṣema, therefore, represents the first part, sequentially and chronologically, of the chapter. Significantly, this is the only one of the three sections which is directly in line with Sarasvatī's Vedic background, and it is from her function as goddess of eloquence in this particular part that her Chinese name derives.

4. Rendering Sarasvatī's Name into Chinese

Indian names are rendered into Chinese characters either through approximate phonetic transcription, through translation of the meaning of the name, or through metonymy. The Chinese translators opted for the third of these options, calling Sarasvatī 'Great Eloquence Deity' (Da Biantian 大辯天 or Da Biantianshen 大辯天神 in Dharmakṣema and in Baogui's edition) and 'Eloquence Talent Goddess' (Biancai tiannü 辯才天女 in Yijing). The almost invariable presence of the character *da* 大 'great' before 辯天(神) both in Dharmakṣema and in Baogui's edition[32]

[32] The only exception is one instance in the Baogui edition, in the eight-stanza praise of the goddess by the Brahman Kauṇḍinya—*gāthā* translated by Yaśogupta and Jñānagupta—

raises questions regarding the relationship of 大 with the other characters. Comparison with corresponding passages in the extant Sanskrit would suggest that 大 is not to be construed with 辯 in the sense of 'Deity of Great Eloquence' (大辯天). Rather, 大 corresponds to *mahā* 'great' of *mahādevī* 'great goddess,' which appears in combination with the name Sarasvatī (*sarasvatī mahādevī*) in a number of instances. The very first line of our chapter serves as a good illustration of this point:

> *atha khalu sarasvatī mahādevī* ... (Sanskrit, p.102, line 13)
> 爾時大辯天 ... (Dharmakṣema, p.344c21)
> 爾時大辯天神 ... (Dharmakṣema in Baogui ed., p.387b24)[33]
> 爾時大辯才天女 ... (Yijing, p.434b27)

There are, on the other hand, instances where the characters in Baogui's edition do not match quite so perfectly with the extant Sanskrit: while p.387b10–11 reads 大辯天神, for example, the corresponding Sanskrit, p.108, lines 3–4, has *sarasvatīṃ devīm*.[34] The title of the chapter, moreover, known in the extant Sanskrit as "Sarasvatī *parivarta*"—and not "Sarasvatī Mahādevī *parivarta*"—is rendered as 大辯天神品 in Dharmakṣema; 大辯天品 in Baogui; and 大辯才天女品 in Yijing. There are a number of factors to which at least some of these discrepancies can be attributed. To begin with, the Sanskrit versions used by the translators do not survive and there were clearly variants from the extant Sanskrit. Furthermore, liberties were taken by the translators, especially when metric form had to be maintained.[35]

What is clear in Dharmakṣema and in Baogui's edition is that the character 大 is not simply an adjective qualifying the goddess's name, but an actual part of her name. Further confirmation for this point may be found in the Chinese renderings for the names of other goddesses: while in Dharmakṣema and in Baogui's edition 大 is consistently placed before 辯天(神), it does not appear in these Chinese versions before the names of the goddesses Śrī (Gongdetian 功德天 'Good Fortune Deity')[36] and Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī (Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神 'Strong Earth De-

where her name is shortened to Biantian 辯天 for obvious metrical reasons: 一切諸女中辯天最爲尊 "Amongst all women, the Eloquence Deity is the most venerable" (p.387c13).

[33] See also Baogui ed., p.387b12 corresponding to Sanskrit, p.108, line 5; and Baogui ed., p.387c10 corresponding to Sanskrit, p.110, line 1.

[34] See also Baogui ed., p.387c12 大聖辯天神 'greatly holy Eloquence Deity' and p.387c13 辯天, both for the Sanskrit *devī* on p.110, lines 4, 5, respectively.

[35] Metrical considerations were clearly an issue in Baogui ed., p.387c12, 13, referred to in note 34 above.

[36] The only exception is one instance in the Baogui edition: p.389c26 大功德天.

ity')[37] in the chapters dedicated to them.[38] This would suggest that Sarasvatī was not understood to be the 'Eloquence Great Deity,' following the Sanskrit *sarasvatī mahādevī*, but rather the 'Deity of Great Eloquence.' I suspect, however, that the origins of the 大 before 辯天(神) do in fact go back to *sarasvatī mahādevī*, yet that it subsequently became part and parcel of her name, which, as a result, took on a different meaning. So as to remain faithful to the original Sanskrit, while also acknowledging the sense the name acquired for the Chinese, in the context of Dharmakṣema's translation and Baogui's edition, I will refer to the goddess as 'Great Eloquence Deity,' which preserves the dual meaning of 'Eloquence Great Deity' as well as 'Deity of Great Eloquence.'

For Yijing, who calls Sarasvatī 'Eloquence Talent Goddess' (Biancai tiannü 辯才天女), the character 大, which in half of the occurrences he places before her name (*Da* Biancai tiannü 大辯才天女),[39] clearly functions as an adjective modifying the whole of Biancai tiannü. He likewise characterizes other goddesses as great: Śrī is called *Da* Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女 the 'great Good Fortune Goddess' in two thirds of the instances in which her name occurs, and Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī is referred to as *Da* Dishennü 大地神女 the 'great Earth Goddess' in three instances.[40]

The phonetic transcription of Sarasvatī's name also appears in our chapter, but only in the context of *dhāraṇī*, found in Baogui's edition and Yijing's translation.[41] Her name appears in two *dhāraṇī*, twice in

[37] In Chinese the name of the Earth Deity is sometimes reversed (Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢 'Earth Deity Strong [one]' in seven instances [e.g., p.345c8] of eighteen in Dharmakṣema and in five instances [e.g., p.388c21] of fourteen in Baogui), or abbreviated to Dishen 地神 'Earth Deity' (seven times [e.g., p.346a24] in Dharmakṣema and six times [e.g., p.388a28] in Baogui).

[38] Only Yijing sometimes includes the character 大 before their names: Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女 (instead of Gongdetian) for Śrī in twelve instances (e.g., p.438c24, 26) out of eighteen; Da Dishennü 大地神女 (instead of Jianlaodishen) for Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī in three instances (p.442a16; p.446b2; p.446b10) out of sixteen.

[39] The goddess's name occurs thirty-two times in Yijing's translation of the sutra, in fifteen of which it is preceded by the character 大 (e.g., p.434b27).

[40] See note 38 above.

[41] This is not to say that the phonetic rendering of Sarasvatī's name in Chinese appears exclusively in the context of *dhāraṇī*—although this is the case in the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. See, for instance, the Chinese translation of the *Yogacārabhūmi Śāstra* by Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. 664), *Yujia shi di lun* 瑜伽師地論, for the river Sarasvatī as Safadi he 薩伐底河 (T. vol.30, no.1579, p.312b10; note that the first two characters *sa* 薩 and *luo* 羅 are eliminated); Xuanzang's translation of the *Ārya-śāsanaprakaraṇa*[?], *Xian yang sheng jiao lun* 顯揚聖教論 (T. vol.31, no.1602, p.530b2) for the river name in full form as Saluosafadi he 薩羅薩伐底河; and *Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing shu* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經疏, Yixing's 一行 commentary on the *Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經

one of them and once in the other.[42] To look at one instance in each of the versions, where Baogui reads *mohetipi suoluosuobodi* 摩呵題毘娑邏娑波帝 for *mahādevī sarasvatī*, 'great goddess Sarasvatī,' Yijing has *mohetibi saluosuandi* 莫訶提鼻薩囉酸底.[43] Since a *dhāraṇī* consists largely of sounds that do not have, even in the Sanskrit, literal meaning, but are rather to be taken as potent sounds expressive of a secret language accessible only to the initiated, Sarasvatī's name is necessarily transcribed phonetically here, like all the other syllables and sounds of the incantation. The power of the *dhāraṇī* lies in its sound, which must be preserved even in translation so that its potency should not be lost. To render Sarasvatī's name by metonymy here, would be to cause the *dhāraṇī* to become totally ineffective.

We have, then, the rendering of Sarasvatī's name by metonymy, based on her function as goddess of eloquence, and, within the specific context of *dhāraṇī*, by phonetic transcription. We have no instance here, on the other hand, of the rendering of her name by translation as 'she who is watery' (*sarasvatī*). Her origins as the riverine goddess Sarasvatī of northwestern India and modern-day Pakistan, pointed to by the literal meaning of her name, is of little significance in a non-Indian setting. What is important is her function as goddess of eloquence, which carries relevance irrespective of geographic, historical, cultural, or linguistic context. It is, therefore, not surprising that the translators of the sutra chose to render her name metonymically.[44]

(Chinese translation of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* by Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing, in T. vol.18, no.848), for Saluosafadi 薩囉薩伐底 as the goddess Sarasvatī (T. vol.39, no.1796, p.634c3–4).

[42] Baogui ed., p.387a21, c1, c8–9; Yijing, p.435c2–3, p.436a27–28, b6. The goddess's name is almost never written with exactly the same characters for a variety of possible reasons, including, for instance, the phonetic rendering of different Sanskrit case endings (e.g., nominative *sarasvatī* vs. dative *sarasvatyai*).

[43] Baogui ed., p.387c8–9; Yijing, p.436b6.

[44] Natalie Gummer (2000, pp.234–39) discusses the renderings of Sarasvatī's name in the Chinese, Khotanese, and Tibetan translations of the sutra in relation to the potency of the text.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GREAT ELOQUENCE DEITY

Dharmakṣema, pp.344c21–345a3
Dharmakṣema repr. in Baogui ed., p.386b24–c5
Sanskrit, p.102, line 13 – p.103, line 13
Yijing, p.434b27–c8[1]

In Dharmakṣema's version, the chapter of the Great Eloquence Deity consists in her address to the Buddha. She who governs over eloquence promises to augment the expounder's eloquence (p.344c21–23):

> 爾時大辯天白佛言。世尊。是説法者。我當益其樂説辯才。令其所説莊嚴次第善得大智。

> At this time, the Great Eloquence Deity said to the Buddha: "Venerable One, for this expounder of the Law, I will augment his joy in expounding and talent in speech (eloquence) so as to make his exposition magnificent in order that he obtain, soon and well, great wisdom."

As eloquence is dependent on knowledge and memory, the goddess assures that she will provide the expounder with both. If in the sutra—whether as memorized by the monk or as written/copied in a manuscript—there should be either missing words or inaccurate meanings of phrases, she will see to it that he regains them.[2] If the monk has a manu-

[1] Although the order in which I usually list references is first the Sanskrit then followed by the Chinese translations, I begin here with Dharmakṣema, as it is the earliest version of the sutra, then the reprint of the same Dharmakṣema in Baogui's edition, and only afterwards the extant Sanskrit, followed by Yijing's translation. In this chapter I will quote primarily from Dharmakṣema's Chinese version, noting discrepancies in the Sanskrit and in the two other Chinese renditions. For the Sanskrit and Chinese versions together with translations in comparative columns, see Appendix A.

[2] 若是經中有失文字句義違娑。我能令是説法比丘次第還得。"If in this sutra there are missing words or the meaning of the phrases is wrong, I can make the *bhikṣu* expounding this Law regain [them] soon" (Dharmakṣema, p.344c23–24). The extant Sanskrit (p.103, lines 2–4) mentions only lost or forgotten words and letters (*yāni kānicit padavyañjanāni ... paribhraṣṭāni bhaviṣyanti vismaritāni ca*), and not erroneous meanings. Yijing (p.434b30–c1), on the other hand, follows Dharmakṣema's version, specifying what I would suggest means both words and meanings of phrases that have been forgotten and lost (文字句義所有忘失). Note that Nobel (1958a, p.229) translates this passage in Yijing as 'die Bedeutung von Silben und Worten' ('the meaning of syllables and words').

script of the sutra before him as he expounds it, there might be various missing letters, words, or meanings in the text in front of him, a text which he has at some point likely memorized. He may therefore recognize these errors, not only because of what he recalls from memory, but also because of his understanding of the contents of the sutra. He is hence divinely authorized to emend the text where necessary through the gifts of memory and knowledge imparted to him by Sarasvatī. The forgotten letters, words, or meanings may also be inherent in the version of the sutra he has memorized, but he may not have recognized them. These shortcomings can likewise be overcome through the blessings of the goddess. Furthermore, it may be his own memory or understanding that experiences lapses: the text he has memorized as well as the text before him might be perfectly accurate, but the expounder may have forgotten some of the letters or words and misunderstood some of the intended meanings. In all these, as well as other, possible scenarios, Sarasvatī promises to help the expounder of the sutra.

The goddess announces, moreover, that she will teach him a *dhāraṇī* (*zongchi* 總持 'complete hold'), a talismanic charm or spell, to prevent loss of memory.[3] The Sanskrit word *dhāraṇī* comes from the root *dhṛ* 'to hold, bear, maintain,' and is hence literally translated into Chinese as 'complete hold' (*zongchi* 總持). For purposes of clarity Yijing adds also the phonetic transcription of *dhāraṇī*: *tuoluoni zongchi* 陀羅尼總持 "*dhāraṇī*-[i.e.,] 'complete hold.'"[4] That which Sarasvatī gives the preacher 'to hold' in memory is at the same time that which will allow him to hold on to what he has learned/memorized so as not to forget it. The *dhāraṇī* is both the means of remembrance, as well as remembrance itself. Hence Jens Braarvig translates *dhāraṇī* as 'memory' in the corresponding passage of the Sanskrit: "... I will give him memory so he does not lose remembrance" (*dhāraṇīṃ cānupradāsyāmi smṛtyasampramoṣaṇāya*).[5] The fact that no incantatory formula appears following this passage supports Braarvig's interpretation. Nevertheless, the term *dhāraṇī* reappears

[3] 能與總持令不忘失。"I can give him a 'complete-hold' that will prevent loss of memory" (Dharmakṣema, p.344c24–25).

[4] Yijing, p.434c1–2. Nobel (1958a, p.229, note 3) suggests that *zongchi wuai* 總持無礙 is the term for *dhāraṇī*, but while *tuoluoni zongchi* 陀羅尼總持 does indeed correspond to *dhāraṇī*, *wuai* 無礙 'without obstacle' goes with *smṛtyasampramoṣaṇāya* 'for the sake of preventing loss of memory' in the Sanskrit (p.103, lines 5–6) and *buwangshi* 不忘失 'prevent loss of memory' in Dharmakṣema (p.344c24–25).

[5] Braarvig 1985, p.22. In Nobel's edition of 1937, the passage appears on p.103, lines 5–6.

several times in the Sarasvatī chapter, and, in all these subsequent occurrences, is immediately followed by an incantation, as we shall see.

Natalie Gummer has explored the importance of the figure of the *dharmabhāṇaka*, the orator of the sutra, who is represented as almost equivalent to the Buddha.[6] Like *dhāraṇī*, *dharma* comes from the root *dhṛ*, and it is that which the orator bears and maintains through retaining and expounding the text. Kings following dharmic behaviour are to reverence the *dharmabhāṇaka* and to conceive of him as Śākyamuni himself. As Gummer points out, "the orator becomes the Buddha when he utters the *Discourse* [the sutra]."[7] Deities like Sarasvatī promise to assist him in various ways, to protect him and attend his exposition. Such, indeed, is the greatness and the prestige accorded to the orator, for it is through him that the sutra is preserved and beings are led to awakening.

It is for the sake of beings "who have planted good roots in the places of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas" (若有衆生於百千佛所種諸善根) that the monk will expound and diffuse the sutra, thanks to the blessings of the Great Eloquence Deity. By ensuring, as we have seen, the perfection of his speech in form and content (word and meaning), she enables the expounder to preserve the sutra from extinction so that these meritorious beings, as well as boundless other sentient beings, may come to hear and profit from it.[8]

The goddess then promises specific benefits that she herself will bestow on beings who hear this sutra:

> 當令是等悉得猛利不可思議大智慧聚不可稱量福德之報。善解無量種種方便。善能辯暢一切諸論。善知世間種種技術。能出生死得不退轉。必定疾得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。
>
> I must make them all obtain acute (lit., wildly sharp), inconceivable great wisdom; gather an unnameable amount of lucky and meritorious retribution; understand well the innumerable kinds of expedient means; be well capable of examining and penetrating all theories; know well the various arts of the world; be able to come out of [the cycle of] birth-and-death and

[6] Gummer 2000, pp.116, 136–64, 178.

[7] Gummer 2000, p.153.

[8] 若有衆生於百千佛所種諸善根。是説法者爲是等故。於閻色提廣宣流布是妙經典令不斷絶。復令無量無邊衆生得聞是經。"If there be beings who have planted good roots in the place of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, for their sake, this expounder of the Law will spread widely and diffuse this wonderful sutra in Jambudvīpa, so as to make [it] uninterrupted (not become extinct), and moreover, so as to make innumerable, boundless beings hear this sutra" (Dharmakṣema, p.344c25–27).

> attain the irreversible [stage] (*avaivartika*); certainly and quickly attain *anuttara samyak sambodhi* (highest perfect awakening).[9]

Having filled the expounder with eloquence based on knowledge and memory, the goddess will endow his audience with wisdom, knowledge, and the ultimate state of awakening. The Great Eloquence Deity is evidently also a goddess of knowledge, like Sarasvatī.

Here ends Dharmakṣema's translation.

[9] Dharmakṣema, p.344c28–345a3. The extant Sanskrit does not include, amidst the list of benefits, coming out of the cycle of birth-and-death and attaining *avaivartika* and *anuttara samyak sambodhi*.

CHAPTER NINE

BATH

Sanskrit, p.104, line 1 – p.108, line 2
Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta in Baogui ed., pp.386c6–387b9
Yijing, pp.434c8–436a2

1. Introducing the Bath

In the extant Sanskrit, in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's translation (Baogui edition), and in Yijing's version, Sarasvatī continues her address to the Buddha, now turning to the bathing ritual using spells and medicinal herbs (*mantrauṣadhisaṃyuktaṃ snānakarma*, 呪藥洗浴法).[1] In what would seem to be an inserted sentence, she suddenly announces she will explain the bath, and then continues, as before in Dharmakṣema, to list the benefits that she will provide to the monk who expounds the sutra and to his audience. These advantages, however, are of a rather different nature: no longer do they belong to the lofty realms of eloquence, knowledge, and awakening—all of which are connected with Sarasvatī—but now extend into the practical, concrete problems of this world believed to result from the intervention of evil stars and deities. All the various types of oppressions, be they calamities, epidemics, diseases, birth and death, quarrels, wars, bad dreams, obstacles, difficulties, or curses, will be completely removed and destroyed, promises Sarasvatī.[2] This is a realm not very much different, in fact, from that of the *Atharva Veda*, to which our bath, through its medicinal herbs, incantations, and benefits, is rather closely related, as we shall see.[3]

In the extant Sanskrit, following the enumeration of oppressions to be removed, Sarasvatī immediately, and once again somewhat abruptly, begins giving instructions for the bathing ritual (p.104, lines 5ff.). In Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese translation, on the other hand, an intervening passage functions as an introduction to the ritual directions, connecting the sutra with the rite (p.386c11–12):

> 是諸衆生若有聽受是經法者。應當誦持此呪。呪藥作湯洗浴其身。是故我說呪藥之法。
>
> These various beings, if they hear and receive this sutra Law, should recite and retain these spells, and, in the hot water made [with] spells and medicinal herbs, bathe their bodies. That is why I will expound the method [of bathing] with spells and medicinal herbs.

Being, in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, connected with the sutra, the bath must therefore now be explained. In Yijing, this correlation is not made, but the goddess instructs 'those who know' to perform the method of bathing: 諸有智者。應作如是洗浴之法。(p.434c13). The absence of any introductory or connecting passage leading to the bathing ritual instructions in the Sanskrit suggests that the extant Sanskrit represents an earlier version of the sutra than what we find translated in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.

If we compare the ritual bathing directions as found in the Sanskrit (pp.104–07) and the two Chinese translations (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, pp.386c13–387a23; Yijing, pp.434c13–435c5), the Sanskrit version is the most brief, while Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta have additional clarifications and details (although also omitting a couple of points found in the Sanskrit), and Yijing is certainly the most extensive. The increase in the number of details given from the Sanskrit to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta to Yijing may be an indication of the growth of the text, and would suggest, again, that the extant Sanskrit is quite possibly earlier than the version that was used for the Chinese rendition of Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.[4] It is also possible, however, that clarifications were added in the process of translation.

The bathing ritual taught by the goddess is in itself very interesting, and the list of medicinal herbs gathered and prepared for the bath is of great value for the study of botanical terminology in Sanskrit and Chinese (in addition to Tibetan, Uighur, and so on), and of the history of ancient pharmacopoeia. Sarasvatī's bathing ritual as it appears in the extant Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan versions of the sutra has been closely studied by Nobel (1951), and, more recently, the Uighur version of the bath has been taken up by Dieter Maue and Osman Sertkaya (1986,

[1] Sanskrit, p.104, line 1; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c6; Yijing, p.434c9–10.
[2] Sanskrit, p.104, lines 2–4; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c8–10; Yijing, p.434c10–13. See Appendix A, pp.283–84.
[3] On the *Atharva Veda* see pp.40–43 above.

[4] Although the number of medicinal herbs prescribed for the bath in the Sanskrit is greater than in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.

1991). I will not attempt here to add to these studies, for the details of the performance of the bath do not enrich our knowledge of the conceptualization of Sarasvatī. Of greater relevance to our study is the question of how the bath might have made its way into the Sarasvatī chapter and why our goddess, amongst all others, should teach it. I will, therefore, limit myself to summarizing the ritual instructions, noting the differences between the three versions, and then turn to the how and why of the bath.

2. Instructions for the Bath

Sarasvatī begins her instructions by listing the herbs to be gathered for the bath: twenty-five of them in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.386c13–17), thirty in the extant Sanskrit (p.104, line 6 – p.105, line 3), and thirty-two in Yijing (p.435a1–8).[5] These medicinal herbs are to be gathered, and then pounded and sieved during the Puṣya asterism (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c18; Sanskrit, p.105, line 4; Yijing, p.435a9). The obtained powder is consecrated with a spell, here given, which is recited one hundred (Sanskrit, p.105, line 5) or 108 (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c19; Yijing, p.435a10) times:

> *sukṛte kṛta kamalijanakarate / haṃkarāte / indrajāli / śakaddrepaśaddre / abartaksike / na kutraku / kapila kapilamati / śīlamati / sandhi dhudhumamabati / śiri śiri / satyasthite svāhā //* [6]

The Chinese versions provide corresponding phonetic transcriptions in characters for all spells. As here, they often begin the spells with *tadyathā* (*chezhita* 哆姪哋 in Yaśogupta/ Jñānagupta, p.386c20; *dazhita* 怛姪他 in Yijing, p.435a11), which in Sanskrit means 'in such a manner as follows, namely' and functions as an introduction to the spell. It is not, therefore, a part of the incantation itself in the Sanskrit, but rather, immediately precedes it (p.105, line 6). Although this might suggest an error on the part of both Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and Yijing, this was almost certainly not the case: the translation teams were highly competent and could not have repeatedly made the same elementary mistake. It is

[5] For a comparative chart of the lists of herbs in the Sanskrit and the two Chinese versions, see Appendix B.

[6] Sanskrit, p.105, lines 6–8. The corresponding Chinese phonetic transcriptions in characters appear in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c20–24 and Yijing, p.435a11–17.

far more likely that the phonetic transcription was simply a convention followed to make it absolutely clear that a transcribed spell came immediately thereafter.

The earth is smeared with cow-dung to delimit the ritual space, referred to as *maṇḍala* 'circle' in the Sanskrit (p.105, line 9), as *daochang* 道場 'place of the way' in Yaśogupta/ Jñānagupta (p.386c25), and as *tanchang* 壇場 'altar place' in Yijing (p.435a18).[7] The Chinese versions provide the measures for this ritual space: according to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta it is to be seven 'elbows' (*zhou* 肘)[8] in width and length (p.386c25), and according to Yijing eight 'elbows' (p.435a18), which indicates therefore that our 'circle' (*maṇḍala*) is in fact a square. Flowers are scattered, and gold and silver bowls are filled with honey and tasty drinks (Sanskrit, p.105, lines 9–10; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c25–27; Yijing, p.435a20–21).[9] Four men in armour are stationed within the altar space (Sanskrit, p.106, line 1), one hidden in each corner according to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.386c27–28), a guardian at each gate according to Yijing (p.435a22). Four maidens carrying pots (Sanskrit, p.106, line 2) or flower vases (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, pp.386c29–387a1), or four boys holding vase water (Yijing, p.435a23) are placed in the altar space, one in each corner according to the Chinese versions. Incense is burnt, music is played, and umbrellas, banners, and flags are hung (Sanskrit, p.106, lines 3–4; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a1–2; Yijing, p.435a24–25).[10]

[7] On the mandala in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, see Snellgrove 1987, vol.1, pp.198–213, especially pp.198–202. In our context it is a non-circular enclosure, a square, as we shall see, created for the bathing ritual. This enclosure separates from the everyday world the sacred space within which the ritual will take place. Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's term *daochang* 道場 'place of the way,' corresponding here to mandala, is generally used to render the Sanskrit *bodhimaṇḍa*: the place or the platform under what came to be called the Bodhi tree, where the historical Buddha Śākyamuni attained awakening (*bodhi*), and by extension a place/platform for attaining awakening through practice, including ritual acts. On the *bodhimaṇḍa* as a kind of mandala, i.e., on the *maṇḍa* of *bodhimaṇḍa* as the *maṇḍa* of *maṇḍala*, see Wayman 1999. Yijing's rendering of mandala here as *tanchang* 壇場 'altar place' is more specifically ritual.

[8] The measure for *zhou* 肘, according to Morohashi (1955–60, vol.9, p.253b), is either two 'palms' (*chi* 尺) or one palm and five inches (*cun* 寸). The measure of the palm (*chi*) varied according to the historical period. At the time of Yijing, it was the equivalent of about 30 cm (see Forte 1988, pp.74–75, note 78).

[9] According to the Sanskrit, the vessels are filled with honey or honey drink (*madhurasa*); according to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, honey drink, wild grape drink, and honey juice and milk (蜜漿葡萄漿蜜漿乳汁); according to Yijing, delicious tastes and milk with honey (美味并乳蜜).

[10] Umbrellas, flags, and banners (*chatradhvajapatāka*) in the Sanskrit; five-coloured sacred banners (五色神幡) in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta; adornments of banners, parasols, and hanging picture designs (幡蓋莊嚴懸繒綵) in Yijing. Note that Nobel (1951, p.138;

According to the Sanskrit (p.106, line 5) and Yijing (p.435a26), mirrors, arrows, and either spears (Sanskrit) or swords (Yijing) are placed in the altar space.

The Chinese versions then provide additional instructions. In Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387a2–3), a newly purified vessel is to be filled with those fragrances, i.e., medicinal herbs, and hot water (*xiangtang* 香湯),[11] and placed in the center of the 'place of the way.' In Yijing (p.435a27), a large platter is buried in the center of the altar and a 'leaking plank' (*louban* 漏版),[12] through which water can evidently pass, is placed over it. Hot water is added to the previously prepared fragrant powder (*xiangmo* 香末), i.e., the pounded medicinal herbs, and set down on the altar (p.435a28). Although unexplained, this may mean, as also supported by Nobel's translation of *louban* 漏版 as a 'plank for climbing' based on the Tibetan,[13] that the method of bathing consists in climbing onto this plank and pouring over oneself the hot water into which the aromatic medicinal herbs have been mixed. This fragrant concoction will then run over one's body and leak into the platter below the plank—a method reminiscent of the traditional Japanese way of washing one's body, prior to plunging into the bath. To bathe, in other words, does not exclusively or necessarily mean to immerse one's body in water, as is clear from the various *snāna* ('bath') performed during royal consecrations, which consist in either sprinkling or pouring pots of different waters/liquid substances over the king's head.[14] If, on the other hand, our bath does consist in immersion of the body, then the use of the leaking plank might be compared to that used in the Japanese *goemonburo* 五右衛門風呂 .

With these preparations in place, the individual 'ties the boundaries' (*sīmābandha*; *jiejie* 結界)[15] of the ritual space by reciting a spell: *arake nayane hile mile gile khikhile svāhā*.[16] While in the Sanskrit (p.106, lines

1958a, p.238 and note 3) interprets *huicai* 繪綵 to be silken tassels ('seidene Quasten'), based on the Tibetan.

[11] Another possible translation of *xiangtang* 香湯 is 'fragrant hot water.'

[12] Nobel (1951, p.138; 1958a, p.239 and note 3) interprets *louban* 漏版 as a plank for climbing ('Bohle zum Besteigen'), based on the Tibetan.

[13] See previous note.

[14] See pp.178–82 below.

[15] Sanskrit, p.106, lines 6–7; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a3; Yijing, p.435b1 (*jiejitan* 結其壇), but also uses the characters *jiejie* 結界 in the immediately following line b2 (結界呪曰).

[16] Sanskrit, p.106, lines 8–9, to which correspond Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a5–6 and Yijing, p.435b3–4. While the *dhāraṇī* is introduced in the Sanskrit with *syād yathedam*

10–11), he then bathes behind (the image of) the Buddha, and afterwards recites another spell (*sagaṭe bigaṭe bigaṭābati svāhā*)[17]—oddly, to assure peace for the bathing he has just completed, in the Chinese versions, the recitation of additional spells precedes the act of bathing. The number of spells and what they are for varies in the Chinese. In Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, we are told, the individual should spell the water (*zhoushui* 呪水) twenty-one times, scattering it in the four directions, then pronounce 'the spell' (*zhou* 呪), presumably the just mentioned water spell, and also the hot water spell (*tangzhou* 湯呪) and the body spell (*shenzhou* 身呪). This sequence is then reversed and only two spells are mentioned: first the body spell is to be recited 108 times, followed by the hot water spell, likewise 108 times. In Yijing, fortunately, the instructions are clearer. Having entered into the altar that has just been bound with a spell, one should spell the water three-times-seven (3 x 7) times, sprinkling it in the four directions, as in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and then one can spell the fragrant hot water (*xiangtang* 香湯) 108 times. There is no spell for the body here.

Yijing (p.435b8) also adds that an obstructing curtain should be placed on the four sides, and then, in both the Chinese versions (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a9; Yijing, p.435b8), the individual bathes his body. The spell that follows, corresponding to the one ensuring peace for bathing in the Sanskrit, is identified in Yijing (p.435b9) as the spell for both the water as well as the hot water. This presents a bit of a problem considering the preceding instructions specifying that the spell for the water should be recited three-times-seven times and the one for the fragrant hot water, 108 times (p.435b6–7), thereby clearly indicating two different spells. In Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta there is no statement identifying this spell, which might pertain either to the water, to the hot water, or to the body. If, as in Yijing, it should pertain to all of them, we are left with the same problem: previous instructions indicate that the spell for the water should be recited twenty-one times, the spell for the body 108 times, and the spell for the hot water likewise 108 times (p.387a7–8). We can, at

"it should be like this" (p.106, line 8), the Chinese versions, as before (see p.164 above), place the phonetic transcription of *tadyathā* (*chezhita* 哆姪哋 in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a5; *dazhita* 怛姪他 in Yijing, p.435b3) at the beginning of the *dhāraṇī*.

[17] Sanskrit, p.106, line 11, to which correspond Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a10–11 and Yijing, p.435b10–11. The *dhāraṇī* is introduced in the Sanskrit with *tadyathā* (p.106, line 11), which in the Chinese versions, as before (see note 16, as well as p.164 above), appears in phonetic transcription at the beginning of the *dhāraṇī* (*chezhita* 哆姪哋 in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a10; *dazhita* 怛姪他 in Yijing, p.435b10).

least, eliminate the body spell from this list of possibilities, for, as we shall see, it appears later on—despite the previous injunction to recite the body spell first and then only the hot water spell (p.387a8 先呪身一百八遍復呪湯一百八遍). It is, therefore, a spell for the water, either cold or hot, or both, as in Yijing.

Following the bath, in Yijing (p.435b12–14), the bath water and the food and drink offerings are thrown into a river or a pond, and all that remains is gathered. The individual then puts on purified clothing and, having left the altar place, enters a purified room.

In the Sanskrit, a request for protection of one's life follows (p.106, lines 12–14), preceded in the Chinese versions by the introduction of a master figure: in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387a12), he is called a practitioner (*xingzhe* 行者)—perhaps a priest in relation to a lay performer of the bathing ritual—who proclaims the great vow (*hong shiyuan* 弘誓願) on behalf of the person who has taken the ritual bath; in Yijing (p.435b14), he is identified as a spell master (*zhoushi* 呪師), who teaches the individual to express the great vow. While the vow does not appear in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, Yijing's spell master does in fact enunciate it: "Forever cut all evil and always cultivate what is good. In all sentients, rouse the heart of great compassion" (p.435b14–15).[18] This vow, in turn, will bring about countless meritorious benefits for one who follows it (p.435b16).

The request for protection of one's life (i.e., the life in one's body) or one's body[19] is addressed to the asterisms in the four directions, and in Yijing also to the sun and the moon (Sanskrit, p.106, line 12; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a12–13; Yijing, p.435b21). The body is to be protected from oppressions caused by asterisms and birth, and by fears (Sanskrit, p.106, lines 12–14; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a13–15). It is fitting, therefore, that a spell for the body should follow.

In Yijing the corresponding passage of the request for protection appears in an entirely different format, in that it is not a supplication, but rather a list of rewards accruing to one who has taken the ritual bath. In a set of *gāthā*, the goddess explains the purpose of the bath and its benefits (p.435b17–22):

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18 永斷衆惡常修諸善於諸有情興大悲心.

19 In the Sanskrit, protection is sought for one's life (*āyus*); in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, for one's body (*shen* 身); and in Yijing, where, as we shall see, the format is quite different, the deities of these constellations together with the sun and the moon will protect the one who has performed the ritual bath, and he will attain prolonged years (擁護得延年).

若有病苦諸衆生　種種方藥治不差
若依如是洗浴法　并復讀誦斯經典
常於日夜念不散　專想慇懃生信心
所有患苦盡消除　解脱貧窮足財寶
四方星辰及日月　威神擁護得延年
吉祥安隱福徳增　災變厄難皆除遣

If illness torments beings, and the various medicinal treatments are ineffective,
if you resort to this method of bathing, and also to recitation of this text,
always [remaining], throughout the day and the night, [with] undivided mind, in conducive (lit., correct), exclusive thought, producing a heart [full of] faith,
the various distresses will disappear completely, you will be delivered from dire misery, and there will be plenitude of treasures.
The powerful deities of the constellations of the four directions, together with [those of] the sun and the moon, will protect you, and you will attain prolonged years.
Good fortune, well-being (peace), and good merit will increase, and all calamities and perils will be removed.

A clear connection is made here between the bath and the healing of illness, although the results extend beyond mere healing.

The function of the spell that follows, introduced already by the preceding request for protection of the body, is now explicitly stated only in the Chinese versions: in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387a15) it works both as the body spell (*shenzhou* 身呪) and the beseeching spell (*yuanzhou* 願呪); in Yijing (p.435b23) it is a spell for the protection of the body (*hushenzhou* 護身呪), to be recited three-times-seven (3 x 7) times. It will be remembered that the spell for the body was mentioned earlier in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387a7–8), together with the spell for the water and the spell for the hot water. It was, however, to be recited, not twenty-one, but 108 times. While the spell for the water (hot or cold, or both) then followed,[20] the spell for the body was not given. It appears only here.

What distinguishes this *dhāraṇī* from the others in the bathing ritual is that the Sanskrit is largely intelligible in terms of meaning. In the Chinese versions we find, as with all other *dhāraṇī*, a corresponding phonetic transcription in characters, with the addition, in Yijing (p.435b24), of *tadyathā* (*dazhita* 怛姪他) at the beginning, for which there is no equivalent either in the Sanskrit or in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta. The *dhāraṇī* in the extant Sanskrit reads (p.106, line 15 – p.107, line 3):

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20 See p.167 above.

śame / biśame svāhā / sagaṭe bigaṭe svāhā / sukhatinate svāhā /
sāgarasambhūtāya svāhā / skandamātrāya svāhā /
nīlakaṇṭhāya svāhā / aparājitabīryāya svāhā /
himabatasambhūtāya svāhā / animilabaktrāya svāhā /
namo bhagabate brahmaṇe / namaḥ sarasvatyai debyai /
sidhyantu mantrapadā / taṃ brahmānumanyatu svāhā //

Śame biśame svāhā! Sagaṭe bigaṭe svāhā! Sukhatinate svāhā!
Hail to the one arisen from the ocean! Hail to him whose measure is Skanda!
Hail to the blue-throated one [i.e., Śiva]! Hail to the one of undefeatable valour!
Hail to the one arisen from Himavant! Hail to the one with an unblinking face (*animīlavaktrāya)*!
Salutations to Lord Brahmā! Salutations to the goddess Sarasvatī!
Let the words of the mantra succeed. Let Brahmā favour that [mantra]![21]

Noteworthy, to begin with, is the reiteration of the previous spell (*sagaṭe bigaṭe bigaṭābati svāhā*) in the initial part of this one.[22] This, in addition to the absence, in the Sanskrit, of an introductory phrase to the spell, suggests the possibility that we may be dealing with one spell alone, which in time became two, separated by an intervening request for protection. The understandable portion of this spell for the body then invokes a variety of deities, including Śiva, Brahmā, and his consort Sarasvatī. It is not clear who the one born from the ocean (*sāgarasambhūta*) or the one whose measure is Skanda (*skandamātra*) might be, but were the latter a corruption of *skandamātṛ* 'mother of Skanda,' which then should have read as *skandamātre svāhā*, it would have been Pārvatī. The 'blue-throated' (*nīlakaṇṭha*) is clearly Śiva, and the 'undefeatable one' whose valour is invoked (*aparājitavīrya*) might be the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, Skanda, who is the leader of the army of the gods. Were *aparājita* in the feminine, it might have referred either to a warrior goddess, like Vindhyavāsinī or Mahiṣāsuramardinī,[23] or to one of the Buddhist goddesses called Aparājitā.[24] The one arisen from Himavant/Himālaya (*himavatasambhūta*), were it likewise in the feminine, would have been Pārvatī, the daughter of the Mountain. I do not know to whom 'the one with an unblinking face' (*animīlavaktra*) might refer. Brahmā and his consort Sarasvatī are then invoked, and the spell ends with a wish for its successful fulfillment through the favour of Brahmā.

[21] Corresponding Chinese versions appear in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a16–23 and Yijing, p.435b24–c5.

[22] While in the Sanskrit and in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta it is the abbreviated form of the spell *sagaṭe bigaṭe bigaṭābati svāhā* that appears in the first part of the following spell (*sagaṭe bigaṭe svāhā*; 娑伽遲毘伽遲娑波呵), in Yijing it is the full form of the spell which is reiterated (with one character change: *zhi* 智 for *zhi* 滯): 索揭滯毘揭滯莎訶毘揭茶 (亭耶反) 伐底莎訶 *sagaṭe vigaṭe svāhā vigaṭa*(?)*bati svāhā*. I follow Nobel's rendition of the Sanskrit spell from Yijing: see Nobel's edition of the Sanskrit, p.269.

[23] On Vindhyavāsinī and Mahiṣāsuramardinī, see Chapters Ten and Twelve below.

[24] See de Mallmann 1975, p.103; Bautze-Picron 2001, pp.276, 278–79. According to de Mallmann (1975, pp.102–03), there are five goddesses called Aparājitā, and also two male Aparājita.

With this concludes Sarasvatī's explanation of the bathing ritual. The words she then speaks are, according to the Chinese versions (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a24; Yijing, p.435c6–7), addressed to the Buddha. She promises to come to the dwelling of those who receive, retain, read, recite, write out, and diffuse this sutra, and practise the bathing ritual, wherever they may live (Sanskrit, p.107, lines 4–7; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a24–28; Yijing, p.435c7–11). She does not come alone, but with a multitude of gods according to the Sanskrit, her various retinues producing celestial music according to the Chinese. The goddess assures that she will remove all diseases from the places where these beings dwell and that she will take away all their oppressions[25] so that they may escape the cycle of rebirths and attain highest perfect awakening (Sanskrit, p.107, lines 6–12; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a27–b5; Yijing, p.435c11–16). The Buddha then praises Sarasvatī—not for providing eloquence and knowledge, over which she governs—but for benefiting all sentient beings by speaking about spells and medicaments (Sanskrit, p.107, lines 13–15; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b6–9; Yijing, p.435c16–18). The extant Sanskrit reads:

sādhu sādhu sarasvati mahādevi / bahujanahitāya
tvaṃ pratipannā bahujanasukhāya yat tvayedṛśāni
mantrauṣadhisaṃyuktāni padāni bhāṣitāni //

Bravo! bravo! great goddess Sarasvatī! You have come for the welfare of many men, for the blessing of many men, since you have spoken such words concerning spells and medicaments.[26]

In Yijing (p.436a1) the Buddha then concludes:

汝當擁護最勝經王。勿令隱沒常得流通。

You should protect the supreme sutra king (i.e., the *Sutra of Golden Light*), not permit that [it] disappear, and always obtain that [it] be propagated.

[25] Cf. the almost identical list of oppressions to be removed, enumerated immediately preceding Sarasvatī's instructions for the bathing ritual (Sanskrit, p.104, lines 2–4; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c8–10; Yijing, p.434c10–13; see p.162 above and Appendix A, pp.283–84).

[26] Sanskrit, p.107, lines 13–15 with translation by Emmerick (1996, p.47).

Then the goddess worships the feet of the Buddha and sits down (Sanskrit, p.108, lines 1–2; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b9; Yijing, p.436a2).

3. Sarasvatī and the Bath

Why, then, does Sarasvatī teach a ritual medicinal bath? Her knowledge of medicinal matters necessarily calls back to mind her healing of Indra in the *Yajur Veda*, likewise in a ritual context.[27] While in the *Yajur Veda* she gave rebirth to Indra, here the medicinal bath is intended to lead to the highest perfect awakening. There is, however, no indication in the *Sutra of Golden Light* that whoever added the bathing ritual to this chapter knew of Sarasvatī's role in the Sautrāmaṇī. Nevertheless, the author/interpolator would certainly have been aware of her river-goddess aspect, and hence of the appropriateness of a water-related deity teaching a water-centered ritual.

3.1 *Medicine*

In terms of medicinal matters, it is clear that behind this ritual bath lies a long tradition of Vedic medicine. Reaching even further back, bathing as such seems to have been rather important from pre-Vedic times, as the Great Bath found in Mohenjo-Daro indicates. Although concern for public health and sanitation were certainly an issue at the time, the Great Bath, like a tank in a Hindu temple, most probably had purificatory, and hence religious, functions.[28]

Later, in the magico-religious tradition of Vedic medicine, we do not find evidence of a medicinal bath, but we do find the different elements of the bath: water, medicinal herbs, recitation of mantras, and auspicious timing. The *Rg Veda* contains certain healing hymns, centered especially on the Aśvins, and stray verses referring to diseases. As we have seen, all remedies were believed to dwell within the Waters (10:9:6ab

[27] See above pp.46ff.

[28] On the Great Bath, see Marshall 1931, vol.1, pp.24–26 (Marshall), pp.131–43 (Mackay); Mackay et al. 1938, p.20, for instance. Marshall does not mention anything about the religious/purificatory function of the bath, but Mackay addresses the subject (in Marshall 1931, vol.1, p.142; Mackay et al. 1938, p.20).

apsú me sómo abravīd antár víśvāni bheṣajā́ /).[29] The *Atharva Veda*, our main source on early Vedic medicine, contains, as Kenneth Zysk points out, a significant number of medical charms intended to remove diseases personified as demons, as well as a mythology specific to healing, where plants were worshipped as goddesses.[30] There is evidence here of extensive knowledge of the local flora.[31] In this system, diseases were believed to occur when malevolent forces entered the body, either as a result of taboos broken, sins committed, or sorcery performed, and were then healed through an elaborate ritual. The healer (*bhiṣáj*), a shamanic-type figure known also as a shaker (*vípra*) and a chanter (*kaví*), was well-versed in the preparation and use of medicines consisting largely of herbs and water,[32] and recited incantations to consecrate these remedies and draw out the demonic forces. To the herbs used in the ritual, he chanted plant-divinity myths, as if to awaken their latent supernatural potency and thus render them medicinally effective against disease-demons. To the demons, he recited incantations to draw their attention to him, as Zysk explains, thereby releasing their grip on the patient, and thereafter either transferring the malevolent forces to enemies, dispelling them into the ground, or having them carried away by birds to a place where they could no longer inflict harm. The healer might wave or stroke plants over the patient's body, fragrant plant substances would be burnt, and the victim would wear vegetal amulets to expel the disease-demons and prevent further attacks.[33] Water, sprinkled or consumed, was used as hydrotherapy to treat both internal and external ailments, a practice that according to Zysk may well have derived from the Harappan medical tradition.[34] For the treatment of consumption or tuberculosis (*yákṣma*), for instance, a patient might be sprinkled from head to foot with water mixed with ghee (Zysk 1985, p.14: *Atharva Veda*, Śaunakīya recension, 2:33). Astrology played a significant part in these rituals, which were

[29] See p.17 above. For further references see Zysk 1993, p.90, note 6.

[30] Zysk 1991, pp.13–20; 1993, pp.3, 9, 96–102. On plants as goddesses, see Zysk 1985, pp.97–102.

[31] Zysk 1991, p.19.

[32] Most Vedic remedies were either of a watery nature or of vegetal origin (Zysk 1985, pp.90–102). Specific diseases and their cures are discussed in great detail in Zysk 1985.

[33] Ibid., pp.8–9. The primary use of plants was for the production of amulets (ibid., p.97).

[34] Ibid., pp.10, 90–92. Zysk also suggests, on the basis of seals discovered, that traditional Indian pharmaceutical knowledge may have its seeds in Harappan culture (ibid., p.3).

performed at auspicious times, most notably at dawn, at noon, and at twilight, and when certain stars were in a particular part of the heavens.[35]

The healers were not priests of the sacrificial tradition, but rather experts in manipulating spirits, who used their extensive knowledge of local flora in the service of their profession, incorporating also elements of the Brahmanical tradition into their knowledge. Zysk argues that "evidence from the medical mythology of the *Atharvaveda* suggests a conscious effort by savants of this tradition to combine aspects of the priestly and the medical traditions, perhaps to authorize the latter in a society dominated by the former and to make the healers equivalent to the sacrificial priests at least within the arena of medical ritual."[36] Healers were in fact denigrated by the Brahmanical hierarchy because of their contact with all kinds of people,[37] which occurred not only through the medical services they dispensed, but also during their search for the plants necessary for their craft, many of which were to be found in very remote mountainous regions.[38] Regular contact with disease and death was no doubt also a deterrent to their social status.

The period from 800–100 B.C.E., standing between early Vedic magico-religious healing and the empirico-rational system of the Āyurveda, represents, as Zysk calls it, the 'heterodox' period of Indian medical history, marked by the contributions of heterodox ascetic renunciants, especially Buddhists.[39] Rejected, as noted above, by the orthodox Brahmanical hierarchy, healers who roamed the country just like the *śramaṇa* renunciants, practising their profession and exchanging information, eventually became indistinguishable from the wandering ascetics.[40] Unhindered by Brahmanic rules and restrictions, they gathered, in their travels, a vast storehouse of medical knowledge, which they systematized according to an empirically and rationally based medical epistemology. The earliest extant systematization was the codification of some of this medical lore in the monastic rules of the Vinaya, which,

[35] Zysk 1985, p.9; 1993, pp.7–10.
[36] Zysk 1991, p.17.
[37] Ibid., pp.21–27.
[38] Simples from great distances were either collected by the healer himself, or traded. The local flora from the plains likewise provided some of the plants. See Zysk 1985, p.96.
[39] On Buddhism and medicine, see also Demiéville's entry on "Byō" in Hōbōgirin 1929–2003, fasc.3, pp.224–65.
[40] On the connection between wandering ascetics and the medical arts, see Zysk 1991, especially pp.27–33.

according to Zysk, was likely the model for later medical handbooks.[41] Infirmaries were set up in Buddhist monasteries, initially to treat monks, and then lay people as well, a most valuable service that facilitated the spread of Buddhism throughout India and to other parts of Asia, and that insured lay support. As care for the sick became a monastic function, monks also studied medical science, which became a part of the curriculum in the large monastic universities, such as Nālandā.

As Zysk discusses, there is considerable overlap in the medical practices described in Buddhist texts and in Āyurveda manuals, which points to a common source for both, i.e., the body of knowledge accumulated by wandering ascetics.[42] These *śramaṇa* groups preserved two types of medical knowledge that were transmitted into early Buddhist and Āyurvedic texts: aspects of the magico-religious healing of the *Atharva Veda* and the empirico-rational system developed among the heterodox renunciants.[43] Buddhist sources contain a wealth of medical information of both types, with the magico-religious tradition predominating in esoteric Buddhism. Our *Sutra of Golden Light*, as Zysk notes,[44] preserves both: while the ritual medicinal bath taught by Sarasvatī reflects magico-religious healing, the chapter on Healing Illness (chapter 16 in the extant Sanskrit; chapter 15 in Dharmakṣema; chapter 20 in Baogui; chapter 24 in Yijing) dealing with the curing of ailments records certain principles of Āyurvedic medicine. In the latter, Jalavāhana, son of the merchant Jaṭiṃdhara who is also "a doctor, a medical man, expert in the chief elements ... fully versed in the eightfold treatise on medicine,"[45] is instructed by his father and heals all beings in the land of king Sureśvaraprabha.

Āyurveda is based on keeping the humours of the body (wind, bile, and phlegm) in a state of equilibrium, a theory traceable to Buddhist Pali literature.[46] The use of mantras is limited to the treatment of specific

[41] Ibid., pp.6, 84–85, 118.
[42] Ibid., especially pp.71–116.
[43] Ibid., pp.32–33.
[44] Ibid., pp.61–62.
[45] Emmerick 1996, p.76. The elements here are the fundamental parts of the body, reinterpreted by Dharmakṣema and Yijing, however, as the *mahābhūta* (earth, water, fire, and wind). For a list of the bodily elements and the eight branches of medicine, see Emmerick 1996, p.76, notes 150–51. The eightfold division of medicine is typical of Āyurveda and refers to general medicine, major and minor surgery, toxicology, demonology, pediatrics (including obstetrics), the science of aphrodisiacs, and the science of elixirs (Dasgupta 1932, vol.II, pp.275–76; Zysk 1991, p.85).
[46] Zysk 1991, pp.85–116 (esp. pp.92–96, 108–13).

ailments and to the collection and preparation of certain medicines.[47] Hydrotherapy is also a feature of Āyurveda, where herbs are mixed into the waters that are used, as in the 'bath sudation' (*avagāhasveda*) treatment, closely resembling the water storeroom (*udakakoṭṭaka*) sudation described by Buddhaghosa.[48]

Probably during the Gupta period, Hinduism assimilated the body of medical lore accumulated and systematized by the heterodox *śramaṇa*, and, by superimposing Brahmanical thought and mythology onto it, rendered it an orthodox Hindu science known as Āyurveda,[49] which came to be considered either as an *upāṅga* (supplement) or an *upaveda* (sub-Veda) of the *Atharva Veda*.[50] According to the *Suśruta* and the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, amongst the earliest treatises expounding Āyurveda,[51] medicine was created by Svayambhū, who taught it to Prajāpati, who then transmitted it to the Aśvins, and they to Indra, and so on.[52] The presence of the Aśvins, famed physicians and succourers,[53] and of Indra in this list indicates, as Jean Filliozat points out, that one of the sources for the mythic origin of Āyurveda is the story of the healing of Indra by the Aśvins and Sarasvatī and the subsequently developed Sautrāmaṇī ritual.[54]

I have considered the ritual bath taught by Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light* as a medicinal bath intended for physical enactment. Gummer, however, suggests an alternate interpretation of the instructions for the bathing ritual, wherein medical lore is used metaphorically to express the substance of the potent sound of the sutra (2000, pp.186, 212). She argues that it is impossible to determine whether the ritual instructions are "meant for bodily enactment or eloquent utterance," (pp.243–44) and that this very uncertainty opens up new possibilities for the interpretation of the potency of the text, both in terms of the form

[47] Mantras were recited in five instances: for the treatment of 1. swellings or tumours and wounds or sores; 2. poison; 3. mental disorders; 4. fever; and 5. for the collection and preparation of certain medicines. See Zysk 1985, p.10; 1989; 1993, pp.1, 10–11.

[48] Zysk 1991, pp.94–95.

[49] Ibid., p.118.

[50] Dasgupta 1932, vol.II, pp.273–74. According to Filliozat (1949, p.1), Āyurveda is also an *upaveda* of the *Ṛg Veda*.

[51] The earliest treatises on Āyurveda include the Saṃhitās of Bhela, Caraka, and Suśruta, the first of which survives only in one fragmentary manuscript (Filliozat 1949, p.1). The *Caraka Saṃhitā* is dated to ca. 100 C.E., while the *Suśruta* is placed in about the fourth century C.E. (White 1996, p.361, note 15). It should be noted, however, that the dating of these texts remains under discussion.

[52] Filliozat 1949, p.2.

[53] See p.47 above. Filliozat (1949) also discusses the Aśvins on p.73.

[54] Filliozat 1949, p.3.

and the content of the sutra: "the potency of the medicinal substances is the potency of the sound of the *Discourse* [*Sutra of Golden Light*] itself, while the potency of the sound of the language represents metaphorically the promised efficacy of the medicinal substances" (p.245). In other words, the rite itself need not be performed; the recitation/audition of the instructions will suffice for the attainment of its promised results.

I am inclined to privilege content over form in interpreting the bathing ritual directions. My impression is that the instructions were indeed intended—at the very least in the Sanskrit—for 'bodily enactment' and that the mere recitation of the sutra, even by the most eloquent orator, was not meant to guarantee the very results of the actual performance of the ritual. It seems to me improbable that concrete, detailed ritual instructions, including a lengthy list of medicinal herbs, should have been enunciated not necessarily to be performed, as Gummer suggests. In the list of no less than thirty herbs in the Sanskrit, the reason behind the versification, as well as the repetition of certain syllables, might have been entirely practical, given the oral/aural context: to make it easier to memorize a very long shopping list. If these were mnemonic devices, the list could not be 'incantatory' in form, as Gummer advances, making the mere utterance of its sounds effective.[55] As for Yijing's twofold rendering of the medicinal herbs, consisting of translation followed by transliteration of the Sanskrit, it was not necessarily intended to convey "the indeterminate relationship between potent substance and potent sound" (Gummer 2000, p.248). For the sake of clarity and for scholarly reasons—let us not forget that Yijing was a scholar too and that he was particularly interested in medicine[56]—whether or not his readers might understand, he may have simply wished to supply the original Sanskrit from which he had translated.[57] We have already seen one instance of this twofold rendering at the beginning of his Great Eloquence Talent Goddess chapter, where Yijing provides both a transcription as well as a

[55] See Gummer 2000, pp.244–45.

[56] In the record of his travels to Śrīvijaya and India (Takakusu translation, 1896, pp.126–40), Yijing even compares Indian medicine of the time with the then current Chinese medical practices.

[57] It is also noteworthy that Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta provide translation for all but one of the herbs, transliteration without translation for one herb, and, in four cases out of twenty-five, both the translation as well as the transliteration. If we compare Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's rendering of the list with Yijing's, the latter reads like a more complete version of the former. See the comparative chart of Herb Lists for the Bath in Appendix B.

translation of *dhāraṇī*: *tuoluoni zongchi* 陀羅尼總持 "*dhāraṇī*-[i.e.,] 'complete hold' " (p.434c1–2).[58] Gummer's interpretation, however, deserves to be considered with due attention. It might be supported by further research bringing evidence of similar cases.

3.2 Abhiṣeka

Another avenue that might be pursued here is the possibility of an initiatory, empowerment ritual akin to or analogous with the *abhiṣeka*, consisting of anointing. This Tantric rite is derived from the elaborate Vedic royal consecration ceremony (Rājasūya), a religious political ritual that symbolized, as J. C. Heesterman explains in his study of 1957, the cosmic process of birth-disintegration-rebirth through the person of the king as the cosmic man Prajāpati (p.122).[59] It is the water in the anointing (*abhiṣeka*), representative of primordial waters, that brings about death and rebirth, disintegration and regeneration (p.119). In the preparation of the consecration fluid, sixteen or seventeen different kinds of water, including that of the river Sarasvatī, are poured together into a vessel, purified, and then distributed into four cups (pp.79–85), using which, four officiants standing in the cardinal points around the sacrificer-king consecrate him (p.114). A final, purificatory bath follows the consecration rite, at which time the remains of the sacrifice (pressed out Soma plants, antelope skin, and garments) are disposed of in the water (pp.167–70). The regenerative nature of the ritual is further emphasized by the performance of the likewise restorative Sautrāmaṇī at the end of the Rājasūya.

The Puranic royal consecration, described in greatest detail in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (400–1000 C.E.), is longer and more complex than its Vedic counterpart, involving a series of baths followed by the crowning and enthronement of the king, all accompanied by the recitation of mantras. The baths take place in three segments, consisting of a 'bath with [various types of] earth' (*mṛt-snāna*), wherein the priest smears

[58] Discussed on p.159 above.

[59] All page references in this paragraph are to Heesterman's detailed study of the ancient Indian royal consecration (1957). See also Weber 1893. The Vedic *rājasūya*, it should be noted, was not a royal consecration to be performed once and for all. In fact, as Heesterman explains, originally it seems to have been a yearly ritual, comparable to annual festivals "by means of which the powers active in the universe are regenerated" (pp.6–7, 222).

fifteen parts of the king's body with different kinds of earth/clay, and then two series of affusions (one Vedic and one Puranic) with various milk products, honey, and waters from different rivers, all either poured or sprinkled from gold, silver, copper, and clay pots onto the king's head.[60] The waters may contain medicinal herbs (*oṣadhi*)—like our bath—perfumes (*gandha*), grain seeds (*bīja*), fruits, flowers, precious stones, ceremonial *kuśa* grass, and so on.[61] All these baths in which the *abhiṣeka* consists are close parallels to the even more elaborate series of baths for the installation of the image of a Hindu god.[62]

If we compare, then, our bathing ritual in the *Sutra of Golden Light* with the highly symbolic politico-religious royal *abhiṣeka*, we find that both use waters, medicinal herbs (Puranic *abhiṣeka*), as well as spells. What is more, the last series of affusions in the Puranic royal consecration includes a bath known as the *puṣya-snāna*, to be performed—again, like our ritual bath—during the Puṣya constellation.[63] This particular bath is to be carried out when portents appear and planets cause afflictions,[64] which is indeed noteworthy, for, in Sarasvatī's explanation of the bath in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, the lists of the benefits resulting from it begin with the removal of oppressions or calamities caused by planets and asterisms.[65] Furthermore, during our bathing ritual itself, a request for

[60] See Inden 1978; Witzel 1987, pp.446–63. While the Vedic series of affusions is performed by the king's *purohita* and Brahman priests who employ Vedic ritual materials and chant Vedic mantras, the Puranic one is conducted by the royal astrologer, people of different occupational castes, officials, and ordinary folk, who engage in ritual acts and recite mantras particular to the Purāṇas (Inden 1978, especially pp.63ff.).

[61] I cannot help but wonder, by comparison with the Puranic royal consecration baths, if the gold and the silver vessel filled with honey, milk, and grape drink in our ritual bath, as well as the pots or flower vases carried by our four maidens/boys, might not be more than simply ornamental: could not the various liquid substances in these vessels, pots, and vases, despite all appearances, have been intended to be poured over the head of the bather? For yet another perspective on such vessels, compare the symbolism and empowering of *kalaśa* jars in the Indo-Tibetan *abhiṣeka* (*kalaśābhiṣeka*) discussed by Snellgrove (1987, vol.1, pp.223–28).

[62] Inden 1978, p.55; Witzel 1987, pp.428–29, 441–46.

[63] On the *puṣya-snāna* see Kane 1930–62, vol.5:2, pp.793–97. The most exhaustive description of the *puṣya-snāna* appears in Varāhamihira's *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* (ca. 500 C.E.), chapter 48. The list of herbs to be used in the *puṣya-snāna* does not match our lists in the *Sutra of Golden Light* and its Chinese translations.

[64] *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* 48:83 *rāṣṭrotpātopasargeṣu rāhoḥ ketoś ca darśane / grahāvamardane caiva puṣyasnānaṃ samācaret //*. See also *Matsya Purāṇa* 239:12–14, where a *puṣya-snāna* (or *puṇyasnāna*) is mentioned: ... *puṣyasnānaṃ samācaret* ... *yatkiñcid grahapīḍā-samudbhavam // tat sarvaṃ nāśam āyāti* ...

[65] Sanskrit, p.104, lines 2–3, and p.106, line 2; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c8 and p.387a28; Yijing, p.434c10–11 and p.435c12. See Appendix A, pp.283–84, 294–95.

the protection of the performer's life or body is addressed to the asterisms in the four directions, and in Yijing also to the sun and the moon.[66] The movement and position of the stars, therefore, were believed to affect the condition of the body. 'Evil stars' (*e xing* 惡星), as the Chinese translators of the sutra call them,[67] might act on the body like the malevolent forces of the magico-religious system of Vedic medicine that were identified as the causes of disease, for which a herbal bath accompanied by spells might be an antidote. In the case of the king, representative of the kingdom, the sighting of portents, such as comets or eclipses, in his land and the occurrence of calamities caused by the planets could be countered through the *puṣya-snāna*. Although our bath performed on the Puṣya constellation is not the same ritual as the royal *puṣya-snāna*, it is clear that the two belong to one and the same category of ceremonies, i.e., rituals in relation to stars and asterisms, aiming at the removal of oppressions or calamities believed to have been caused by these celestial bodies.

The royal conception of the Buddha was discussed by Paul Mus in 1933,[68] where he compared the royal *abhiṣeka* to the bathing of the Buddha at birth: "two Nāgas, in the ancient sources, seven or nine thereafter, vomit over him torrents of celestial waters, hot and cold, combined in a pleasant mixture."[69] *Abhiṣeka*, furthermore, consecrates the tenth and final stage of the Bodhisattva's career. In the Tantric traditions, the *abhiṣeka* functions as an initiation or empowerment by aspersion. It takes place, like the royal *abhiṣeka*, within a delimited sacred space (in the Tantras called *cakra* or *maṇḍala*), as the teacher sprinkles the student while reciting a mantra.[70] Buddhist *abhiṣeka* was likewise practised in China. According to Michel Strickmann, in surviving Buddhist literature, the earliest extant reference to the *abhiṣeka* "as a concrete rite, performed by mortals rather than buddhas," appears in the mid-fifth-century *Book of Consecration* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經, T. vol.21, no.1331).[71] In extant

[66] Sanskrit, p.106, line 12; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387a12–13; Yijing, p.435b21.
[67] Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.386c8 and p.387a28; Yijing, p.434c10.
[68] Mus 1933, pp.822–38.
[69] Ibid., p.825: "deux nāga dans les sources anciennes, sept ou neuf par la suite, vomissent sur lui des torrents d'eaux célestes, chaudes et froides, se réunissant en un mélange agréable." Although Mus does not use the term 'bathing,' this is clearly what is taking place.
[70] Different *abhiṣeka* practised in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism are discussed in Snellgrove 1987, vol.1, pp.213–77. For the Hindu Tantric practice of *abhiṣeka*, see Gupta, Hoens, and Goudriaan 1979, p.88 (Hoens).
[71] Strickmann 1990, p.85.

Indian Buddhist literature, the articulation of the *abhiṣeka* as an explicit metaphor of royal consecration, Ronald M. Davidson argues, is apparent by the early eighth century.[72] Davidson advances that esoteric Buddhism as a whole represents "a direct Buddhist response to the feudalization of Indian society in the early medieval period [500–1200 C.E.], a response that involves the sacralization of much of that period's social world."[73] Political paradigms are transformed into vehicles of salvation, where much of the same terminology is maintained: the politico-religious coronation of the king, centering on affusion (*abhiṣeka*), becomes the consecration of the monk/practitioner; and while the coronation legitimates the king's dominion over a circle of vassals (*maṇḍala*), the consecration provides the monk/practitioner with dominion over a circle of divinities (*maṇḍala*).[74] Imagery, language, and ritual reflective of a political paradigm is all the more natural for a sutra intended for the protection of the state. As we have seen, in our *Sutra of Golden Light* the Four Great Kings, evidently addressing their ruling human counterparts, prophesy the continued reign and prosperity of the sovereign who upholds the text. Thus, reflecting its historical, political, religious, and cultural environment, our sutra draws on language and ritual that would be resonant to its specifically targeted audience. With this in mind, the inclusion in the sutra of a ritual, herbal bath that may be akin to or analogous with the *abhiṣeka*, the central part of the royal consecration ceremony, hardly seems out of place. This is not to say, however, that the text and its instructions for the bathing ritual were addressed exclusively to kings, but rather, as I have noted earlier, that the composers/compilers/editors of the sutra were well aware that its spread and diffusion, not to mention its survival, would be greatly enhanced through the promotion of the sutra by rulers. Hence, while the *Sutra of Golden Light* addresses the widest possible audience, it aims particularly at kings by way of a promise of protection of the state and by way of language and ritual that might be most meaningful to them.

As a final point, it should be noted that the function of the bath taught by Sarasvatī here need not be restricted to only one of the two above possibilities: either a healing bath inherited from the Vedic magico-religious system of medicine or a kind of *abhiṣeka*. As we have seen, the two overlap in a number of respects, including the use of water, herbs,

[72] Davidson 2002, p.126.
[73] Ibid., p.2.
[74] See Davidson's discussion in 2002, pp.113–68.

and spells. In the Puranic royal *abhiṣeka*, we note not only the use of medicinal herbs mixed, together with other products, into the affusion waters, but also the explicit recollection of the healing functions of these very waters in the mantras recited.[75] Our bath with its long list of medicinal herbs and spells might have been incorporated into the framework of a consecration ritual reflective of a historical, political context and directed particularly at a ruling class, who would be most receptive not only to the benefits promised by a sutra for the protection of the state, but also to the familiar political language and ritual found herein. Probably because of Sarasvatī's well established identity and connections with water and healing, the instructions for the bathing ritual were placed in the mouth of the goddess of eloquence and knowledge.

[75] Inden 1978, pp.66, 70–71.

CHAPTER TEN

KAUṆḌINYA'S PRAISES

Following Sarasvatī's explanation of the ritual medicinal bath and the Buddha's words of approval, the Brahman Kauṇḍinya extols the goddess at length. While some of the praise is directed to Sarasvatī, the Great Eloquence Deity governing memory and knowledge as we know her, other parts of the praise, especially in Yijing's far more elaborate version, do not correspond to her description in most Vedic, epic, or Puranic texts, but rather point to an ascetic goddess or to a battle goddess, as we shall see.

This part of the chapter can be divided into three sections consisting of:

1. shorter praise (three stanzas)
2. spell taught by Sarasvatī
3. longer praise (eight stanzas)

In addition to these three sections held in common by the extant Sanskrit, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and Yijing, three more appear in Yijing:

4. following the spell taught by Sarasvatī (2.), the goddess teaches a corresponding spell rite;
5. following this spell rite, Kauṇḍinya recites a hymn from the *Harivaṃśa*;[1]
6. following the longer praise (3.) held in common by all three versions, in a kind of supplement consisting of 'part 2' (大辯才天女品第十五之二) of Yijing's chapter (p.437c17–438c23), Kauṇḍinya provides the specific words of praise to be recited by people who wish to invoke Sarasvatī's compassion and protection, so as to attain eloquence, understanding, wisdom, skill in debate, and the fulfillment of all their wishes.

These three extra sections are also found in the ninth-century Tibetan translation from Sanskrit (Tib. II),[2] not to mention in complete transla-

[1] The *Harivaṃśa*, ascribed to the third or fourth century C.E., is a kind of supplement to the *Mahābhārata* epic, famous for its account of the life of the god Kṛṣṇa.
[2] See chart in Nobel 1958a, p.228.

tions from Yijing (e.g., Tib. III). Hence, Yijing's version is structured as follows:

1. shorter praise
2. spell taught by Sarasvatī
   4. spell rite
   5. *Harivaṃśa* hymn
3. longer praise
   6. words of praise to be recited

I will discuss first the three sections held in common by the extant Sanskrit, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and Yijing, which are chronologically earlier, and then the three further sections added in Yijing.

1. Shorter Praise

Sanskrit, p.108, lines 3–10
Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b10–17
Yijing, p.436a3–10[3]

1.1 *Stanza One*

Kauṇḍinya eulogizes the great goddess Sarasvatī as famous throughout the worlds and as a giver of boons:

sarasvatī mahādevī *pūjanīyā mahātapā /* *vikhyātā sarvalokeṣu* *varadātā mahāguṇā //*	亦當恭敬 大辯天神 一切世間 名悉遍到	聰明勇進辯才天 人天供養悉應受 名聞世間遍充滿 能與一切衆生願
Sarasvatī, the great goddess, is worthy of worship, possesses great asceticism,	Further, I pay reverence to the Great Eloquence Deity.	Wise and of brave energy, the Eloquence Talent Deity receives the worship of humans and gods.
famous in all worlds,	Throughout the worlds, her name reaches completely and everywhere.	Her name is heard throughout the worlds and fills everywhere.
a giver of boons, of great virtues.		She is able to meet the wishes of all beings.[4]

[3] Note that the page and line references provided are not only to the three stanzas in question, but include also the introductory lines to the shorter praise. For the introductory lines, see Appendix A.

[4] Sanskrit, p.108, lines 5–6 (translation by Emmerick 1996, p.47); Yaśogupta/

Great asceticism (*mahātapas*) is not characteristic of the Sarasvatī we know from Vedic, epic, or Puranic sources. While the depiction of the goddess as *mahātapā* 'she of great heat/energy' does not find a corresponding Chinese expression in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, it does indeed appear in Yijing as *yongjin* 勇進 'brave energy,' an abbreviation, I would suggest, of *yongmeng jingjin* 勇猛精進, one of the ten virtues of the Master of the Law in connection with the career of the Bodhisattva, consisting in the manifestation of the brave heart of the Bodhisattva and in the practice of zealous progression of the good Law, as well as in advancing in difficult practices.[5] This virtue appears, for instance, in the translation of the *Lotus Sutra* attributed to Kumārajīva (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經, T. vol.9, no.262, p.3a20: 又見菩薩勇猛精進入於深山), with reference to Bodhisattvas entering into deep mountains and, as Leon Hurvitz translates *yongmeng jingjin* 勇猛精進, 'striving with courage and determination.'[6] The characters 勇猛精進 in Kumārajīva's translation are a rendering of the Sanskrit *dhīra* (*kāṃścin na paśyāmy ahu bodhisattvān girikandareṣu praviśanti dhīrāḥ*) 'full of wisdom (or constancy).'[7] In some of the other passages of the *Lotus Sutra* where *dhīra* is to be found, *vīra* 'brave' appears as an alternative reading.[8] However, neither *dhīra* nor *vīra* are present in our corresponding Sanskrit stanza of Kauṇḍinya's praise of Sarasvatī; instead, we have *mahātapas*. I think the character *yong* 勇 of Yijing's *yongjin* 勇進 here stands for *yongmeng* 勇猛 'brave' and corresponds to *mahā* 'great,' while *jin* 進 stands for *jingjin* 精進 'progression of energy' and corresponds to *tapas* 'heat/energy.'[9]

Sarasvatī, at any rate, is not one to enter deep mountains, like the Bodhisattvas of the *Lotus Sutra*, or to engage in ascetic practices. Nevertheless, in the next stanza of Kauṇḍinya's praise the goddess's dwelling is identified as a mountainous habitat, her clothing as that of an ascetic, and her practice as *tapas*.

Jñānagupta, p.387b12–13 (middle column above); Yijing, p.436a5–6 (right column above). Translations from the Chinese versions are my own. Notes to the translations appear in Appendix A below.

[5] See Oda 1917, pp.929b, 1757b.

[6] Hurvitz 1976, p.8. Cf. Jean-Noël Robert's French translation 'dans un zèle farouche' ('with ferocious zeal') in 1997, p.53.

[7] Kern 1884, p.12.

[8] See Ejima 1985–93, fasc.5, p.1988, under '*dhīra*.'

[9] Cf. Yijing's rendering of *mahātapas* with the characters *da jingjin* 大精進 in this same chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light* on p.437a9 (see Ludvik 2006, pp.26–28).

1.2 *Stanza Two*

śikhare samāśritā kāntā	恒在山中 天龍鬼神 一切悉敬	依高山頂勝住處
darbhacīvaravāsitā / *darbhavastraṃ dhārayantī*	常披草衣	葺茅爲室在中居 恒結軟草以爲衣
ekapādena tiṣṭhati //	一脚而立	在處常翹於一足
Dwelling on a peak, beautiful,	Always dwelling in a mountain, gods, dragons, demons, and deities all revere [her].	Her superior dwelling is atop a high mountain,
clad in a grass garment,	Always wearing robes of grass,	and a grass thatched roof is the house where she lives.
wearing grass clothing,		Always tying pliable grass to make [her] clothes,
she stands on one foot.	she stands on one foot.	she continuously stands in her place on one foot.[10]

While the brave, mountain-entering Bodhisattvas of the *Lotus Sutra* are not known to stand on one leg, the Hindu goddess Pārvatī 'she who is of the mountain,' the daughter of Himavant (the Himalayan mountain), most certainly is. In order to win the ultimate ascetic Śiva who dwells on Mount Kailāsa absorbed in meditation as her husband, Pārvatī engaged in lengthy ascetic practices, including also standing on one leg. Once married, when Śiva made a joke of her 'dark' complexion (*kālī*), Pārvatī resolved to perform *tapas* so as to become 'fair' (*gaurī*). Following one thousand two hundred divine years of ascetic practices, Brahmā granted her wish, and the goddess Kauśikī was born from her sloughed dark skin (*kośī*). During their period as newlyweds, Pārvatī once covered Śiva's three eyes with her hands, and the world suddenly turned to darkness. Śiva was angered at her misconduct and consequently Pārvatī took up *tapas* once again. Images of Pārvatī standing on one leg begin to appear from the eighth century.[11] The characterization *mahātapā*, therefore, would undoubtedly fit her better than it does Sarasvatī in the previous stanza.[12]

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[10] Sanskrit, p.108, lines 7–8 (Emmerick 1996, p.47); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b13–14; Yijing, p.436a7–8.

[11] Joshi 1996, p.35. On Pārvatī, see Kingsley 1986, pp.34–54, especially pp.41–46. On specifically *tapasvinī* Pārvatī, see Joshi 1996. The one thousand two hundred divine years of *tapas* is mentioned in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, critical edition, chapter 53 (see Yokochi 2004, p.161). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the *Skanda Purāṇa* are to the new critical edition still in preparation. About two thirds of the Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī cycle (discussed below on pp.212–14) appears in Yokochi 2004, pp.197–334.

[12] Pārvatī's lengthy *tapas* are indeed described as great in *Skanda Purāṇa* 55:28a

1.3 *Stanza Three*

Following this unexpected invocation of what seems to be another goddess, Kauṇḍinya turns back to Sarasvatī proper, goddess of eloquence.

sarvadevāḥ samāgamya	一切諸天 悉来到彼	諸天大衆皆来集
tām ūcur vacanaṃ tv idam / *jihvāṃ vimuñca sattvānāṃ*	欲請天神 願施一切 衆生智慧 言語辯了	咸同一心申讚請 惟願智慧辯才天
bhāṣantu vacanaṃ śubham //	能以善言	以妙言詞施一切
All the gods assembled	All the gods came to her together	The great assembly of the gods all came and gathered,
and spoke these words to her:	and requested the deity:	whole-heartedly uttered a eulogy [to her] and requested:
Let loose the tongue of beings! They should speak a fine speech.	We pray you grant all beings wisdom to speak and argue, and ability with fine speech.	May wise Eloquence Talent Deity, with [her] wonderful words, grant everything.[13]

While in the Sanskrit, Kauṇḍinya describes all the gods coming together to request Sarasvatī loosen the tongue of beings, so as to grant them fine speech, in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta they are more specific: they ask her to give beings wisdom, so that they can both speak and argue, as well as ability with good words, i.e., eloquence. Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's rendering might also be interpreted as a request to the goddess herself to speak: "We pray [to you], who grant all beings wisdom, to speak and argue, [you] who are skilled in fine speech." In Yijing's text it is clearly she herself who is the speaker of fine speech, for the gods ask that she give everything by way of her wonderful words. While *vacanaṃ śubham* has the general sense of auspicious or fine speech, the good (*shan yan* 善言) and wonderful (*miao yan* 妙言) words in the Chinese versions clearly refer to mantra and *dhāraṇī*. And a *dhāraṇī* spoken by the goddess does in fact follow, in all three versions.

(*mahad dhīdaṃ tapas taptaṃ* ...). See Yokochi 2004, p.216.

[13] Sanskrit, p.108, lines 9–10; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b15–17; Yijing, p.436a9–10. For the Sanskrit, the translation of the gods' request is my own. Emmerick renders it as: "Let loose your tongue. Speak to beings a fine speech" (1996, pp.47–48).

2. Spell Taught by Sarasvatī

Sanskrit, p.108, line 11 – p.109, line 12
Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b18–c9
Yijing, p.436a11–b7

The goddess then pronounces a partly intelligible *dhāraṇī* invocation addressed to herself. It is, therefore, a spell that she teaches beings, so that they themselves may be able to pronounce it, thereby invoking Sarasvatī for her blessings. According to Lokesh Chandra, however, who has studied this *dhāraṇī* as it appears in Sanskrit manuscripts of the sutra, in Yijing's Chinese translation, as well as in the Tibetan (Tib. III) and Uighur renderings from Yijing, there are actually two spells here: the first invoking Mārīcī and the second, Sarasvatī.[14] The meaning of *marīci* is a ray or a particle of light, and the Buddhist goddess Mārīcī 'she of a ray of light' is a luminous deity representing awakening. She is an expression of the light that spread across the universe when Śākyamuni attained awakening under the Bodhi tree, and that destroyed the darkness of Māra.[15] One would expect, therefore, references to light, awakening, and destruction of the darkness of ignorance in a spell invoking Mārīcī.

Chandra suggests that the Chinese, Tibetan, and Uighur translations of this *dhāraṇī* taught by Sarasvatī provide earlier and better readings of the spell in their phonetic transcriptions of the Sanskrit than what appears in Sanskrit manuscripts. His reconstitution of the Sanskrit, followed by my translation, reads:

> *tadyathā /*
> *mure cire / avaje avajavati / hiṅgule miṅgule miṅgulavati / maṅguṣe / mārīci / samati visamati / agri-magri / taraci taracavati / ciciri / siri miri / mārīci / prāṇapriye / lokajyeṣṭhe / lokaśreṣṭhe / lokapriye / siddhavrate bhīmamukhi śuci-cari apratihate apratihatabuddhi / namuci-namuci mahādevi pratigṛhṇa namaskāram amukasya / mama buddhi darśihi / sarva-sattvānāṃ buddhir apratihatā bhavatu / śivaṃ me viśudhyatu śāstra-śloka-mantrapiṭaka-kāvyādiṣu /*
>
> As follows:
> Mure cire (O Mārīcī?)![16] O Avajā (low-born)! O Avajavatī! O Hiṅgulā (one with a vermillion mark on your forehead)! O Miṅgulā! O Miṅgulavatī! O Maṅguṣā (she-mongoose)! O Mārīcī! O Samatī! O Visamatī! O first among the foremost! O Taracī (swift one)! O Taracavatī! Ciciri siri miri! O Mārīcī! O you who are dear to life! O eldest in the world! O best in the world! O dear to the world! O you whose vow is accomplished! O you whose countenance is frightful! O you whose conduct is pure! O unobstructed one! O you whose intellect is unobstructed! Namucī! Namucī! O great goddess! Accept the homage of so-and-so![17] My intellect *darśihi* [?]. Let the intellect of all beings be unobstructed! Let my welfare grow perfectly pure in [studying] textbooks, verses, spell-collections, poems, and so on.
>
> *tadyathā /*
> *mahāprabhāve hili-mili hili-mili / vicaratu me buddhir amuka-buddhi-śuddhiḥ bhagavatyāṃ devyāṃ sarasvatyām / karaṭe keyūre keyūramati hili-mili hili-mili / āvāhayāmi mahādevi buddhasatyena dharmasatyena saṅghasatyena indrasatyena varuṇasatyena / ye loke satyavādinaḥ teṣāṃ satyena satyavacanena āvāhayāmi / mahādevi hili-mili hili-mili / vicaratu amukabuddhiḥ / namo bhagavati mahādevi sarasvati / sidhyantu mantrapadā me / svāhā //* [18]
>
> As follows:
> O you of great splendour! Hili mili hili mili! Let my intellect, pure as the intellect of so-and-so, move about in the blessed goddess Sarasvatī! O Karaṭā (one of low profession?)! O Keyūrā! O Keyūramatī (you who are wearing an upper-arm bracelet)! Hili mili hili mili! I invoke [you], O great goddess, by the truth of the Buddha, by the truth of the Dharma, by the truth of the Saṅgha, by the truth of Indra, by the truth of Varuṇa. Whatever truth-speakers there are in the world, by their truth, [their] true speech, I invoke [you], O great goddess! Hili mili hili mili! Let the intellect of so-and-so move about [in you]! Homage, O blessed great goddess Sarasvatī! Let the words of my spell succeed. Hail!

Despite the absence of references to light, awakening, or destruction of darkness in the first part of the spell (or in the first spell), the name 'Mārīcī' does appear at least twice, and if Chandra's interpretation of *mure cire* as Mārīcī is correct, then three times. Would this necessarily mean that it is a spell invoking the goddess Mārīcī? Could it not simply be a name applied here to Sarasvatī? Repetition of names and particles does indeed arise in spells (most notably above, *hili mili*) and hence two definitive occurrences of *mārīci* may not be so revealing after all. Spells invoking Mārīcī do indeed appear in the Taishō edition of the Buddhist

[14] Chandra 1993, pp.181–207, "Comparative Study of the Chinese and Uigur Invocation to Sarasvatī." Chandra has not included Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's version of the spell in his study.
[15] See Bautze-Picron 2001, p.281.
[16] Chandra (1993, p.185) understands *mure cire* to refer to Mārīcī.

[17] The name of the individual pronouncing the *dhāraṇī* should be inserted in place of 'so-and-so' (*amukasya*).
[18] Nobel's transcribed rendering of Yijing's spell appears in his edition of the Sanskrit, pp.27–28.

Canon: among texts dedicated to her, the earliest is the *Molizhi tian tuoluoni zhou jing* 摩利支天陀羅尼呪經 (*Mārīcī dhāraṇī*; T. vol.21, no.1256). Given the challenges presented by the use of different characters to render *dhāraṇī* phonetically and by the fact that a spell invoking Mārīcī might appear in any text, not only in ones dedicated to her, the task of establishing whether or not this same spell, which Chandra suggests is dedicated to Mārīcī, is found elsewhere in the Buddhist Canon is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that I have doubts as to whether this is a spell to Mārīcī, and if it is, I do not know why it is found here together with a spell invoking Sarasvatī. Chandra's explanation that Mārīcī "seems to be the precursor of Sarasvatī,"[19] furthermore, is unclear.

In the context of our sutra, at any rate, the devotee pronouncing this *dhāraṇī* calls on Sarasvatī, so that his intellect may move about in her, who is goddess of eloquence and knowledge. Clearly, the purpose of the spell, then, is to obtain knowledge through the blessings of the goddess.

3. Longer Praise

Sanskrit, p.110, line 1 – p.112, line 4
Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, pp.387c10–388a7
Yijing, p.437b21–c12[20]

While the extant Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta introduce the eight-stanza praise as *gāthā* (*jie* 偈) uttered by Kauṇḍinya, Yijing calls them spells (*zhou* 呪). Nobel argues that the exclamation *svāhā* appearing at the end of the sixth stanza indicates that this longer praise does in fact constitute a magic spell.[21] The Sanskrit reads:

> *athācāryavyākaraṇaḥ kauṇḍinyo brāhmaṇaḥ sarasvatīṃ mahādevīm imābhir gāthābhir abhyaṣṭāvīt //*
>
> Then the teacher and expounder Kauṇḍinya, the Brahman, praised Sarasvatī, the great goddess, in these verses.[22]

[19] Chandra 1993, p.184.
[20] Note that page and line references provided are not only to the eight stanzas in question, but include also the introductory and conclusive lines to the longer praise.
[21] Nobel 1958a, p.256, note 3.
[22] Sanskrit, p.110, lines 1–2 with translation by Emmerick (1996, p.48). For the corresponding passages in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387c10) and Yijing (p.437b21), see Appendix A.

3.1 *Stanza One*

Kauṇḍinya then addresses spirits known as Bhūtas in the Sanskrit and demons and deities (*guishen* 鬼神) in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta. Although Yijing omits the Brahman's address to any particular group(s) of beings here, the corresponding passage appears earlier in his chapter (p.437a3–5), immediately preceding his translation of the *Harivaṃśa* hymn (exclusive to Yijing amongst the versions treated here) placed just before the eight-stanza praise under discussion. Kauṇḍinya's speech, in Yijing, is directed at the great assembly of humans and gods, and clearly forms a parallel with the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta:

śṛṇvantu me bhūtagaṇā	一切諸鬼神	汝等人天一切大衆
hi sarve	今當至心聽	如是當知皆一心聽
stoṣyāmi devīṃ	我今欲讚嘆	我今更欲依世諦法
pravarottamacāruvaktrām /	大聖辯天神	讚彼勝妙辯才天女

May all the hordes of Bhūtas	All demons and deities	You all, the entire great assembly of humans and gods, should know [the spell rite the goddess has just explained] in this way. All
hear me.	should now listen with all [their] hearts	[of you] listen wholeheartedly!
I will praise	[as] I now wish to praise	I now again wish, by resorting to the way of conventional truth, to praise that excellent,
the goddess, whose face is supremely, extremely beautiful,	the greatly holy Eloquence Deity.	wonderful Eloquence Talent Goddess.[23]

Thereupon, Yijing's version (p.437a5) states that Kauṇḍinya then pronounced the *gāthā* (即説頌曰), in parallel with the introduction of the eight-stanza praise in the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.

In the second half of this first stanza, constituting the praise itself, the Brahman describes the goddess's superiority amongst women in the realms of different classes of beings, including gods and demons:

[23] Sanskrit, p.110, lines 3–4 (Emmerick 1996, p.48); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c11–12; Yijing, p.437a3–5. On the reason for "resorting to the way of conventional truth" in Yijing, see Ludvik 2006, p.13.

		敬禮敬禮世間尊
yā mātṛgrāme *pravarottamāgradevī* *sadevagandharva-* *surendraloke //*	一切諸女中 辯天最爲尊 諸天修羅等 乾闥及夜叉 世間諸聖中 一切最爲尊	於諸母中最爲勝 三種世間咸供養 面貌容儀人樂觀
		Salutations, salutations to the venerable one of the world.
who among women	Amongst all women, the Eloquence Deity is the most venerable.	Amongst mothers, she is the most superior.
in the world of the gods, Gandharvas, and lords of gods, is the supreme, chief, excellent goddess.	Amongst the gods, Asuras, etc., the Gandharvas and Yakṣas, the saints of the world, she is the most venerable.	The three worlds all worship [her]. People behold her countenance and demeanour with delight.[24]

While the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta have 'amongst women,' Yijing has 'amongst mothers.' This discrepancy may be based on a literal understanding of *mātṛgrāme* as 'aggregate of mothers,' rather than on its more general sense of women.

3.2 *Stanza Two*

In this stanza, Kauṇḍinya praises Sarasvatī's physical beauty and virtue:

nānāvicitraguṇa- *saṃcitālaṃkārāṅgā*	種種諸功德 以用莊嚴身	種種妙德以嚴身
sarasvatī nāma viśālanetrī /	眼如優波羅	目如脩廣青蓮葉
puṇyojjvalā vimalajñāna- *guṇair vikīrṇā*	智慧功德相	福智光明名稱滿
nānāvicitraratnopama- *darśanīyā //*	譬如七寶珠 世間甚難見	譬如無價末尼珠
With limbs full of adornments of various virtues,	Various kinds of virtues adorn her body.	Her body is adorned with various wonderful virtues.

[24] Sanskrit, p.110, lines 5–6 (Emmerick 1996, p.48; on my modification of Emmerick's 'lords of Asuras' to 'lords of gods,' see Appendix A, p.302, note 33); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c13–15; Yijing, p.437b22–23. Cf. the first line of Yijing (敬禮敬禮世間尊) with the first two lines of his translation of the *Harivaṃśa* hymn discussed in Ludvik 2006, pp.17-18. Yijing's third line (三種世間咸供養), furthermore, corresponds to the Sanskrit *tribhuvaneśvarī* 'queen of the three worlds' in the same *Harivaṃśa* stanza (see Ludvik 2006, p.17).

Sarasvatī by name is broad-eyed,	Her eyes are like *utpala* (blue lotuses).	Her eyes are like long and wide blue lotus petals.
brilliant in merit, full of the virtues of pure knowledge,	The appearance of her knowledge and virtue	She is full of blessed knowledge, brilliance, and fame,
and beautiful like a variety of jewels.	is like the seven jewels difficult to see in this world.	like a priceless *maṇi* jewel.[25]

While the Sanskrit reads 'broad-eyed,' Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta liken the goddess's eyes to '*utpala*' (優波羅), blue lotuses or water lilies, and Yijing to 'long and wide blue lotus petals.' Where the Sanskrit describes Sarasvatī as 'beautiful like a variety of jewels,' Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta compare her knowledge and virtue (mentioned just before her beauty in the Sanskrit) to 'seven jewels difficult to sce in this world.' Yijing, in turn, says the goddess is filled with blessed knowledge, brilliance, and fame 'like a pricelcss *maṇi* jewel.'

3.3 *Stanza Three*

Next to be lauded, in the Sanskrit and in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, is Sarasvatī's virtue *par excellence*, speech, over which she governs. A variety of other praises then follow, no one version of the stanza precisely matching with either of the others.

stoṣyāmi tāṃ *pravaravākyaguṇair viśiṣṭaiḥ*	我今欲讚嘆 甚深最勝語	我今讚歎最勝者
siddhikarāya pravarottamāya /	決定施與一切衆 最勝最高無過者	悉能成辦所求心
praśastatantrāya	相好端嚴潤衆生	
guṇākarāya *vimalottamāya kamalojjvalāya //*	形貌清淨如蓮華	眞實功德妙吉祥 譬如蓮花極清淨
I will praise her by reason of her distinguished virtues of excellent speech,	I now wish to praise the one whose speech is very profound and supreme,	I now praise the supreme one.
because she causes excellent, supreme success,	who determines to gratify all beings, who is the supreme, the most high, the unsurpassed.	She can fulfill all that is sought after by the heart.

[25] Sanskrit, p.110, lines 7–10; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c16–18; Yijing, p.437b24–25. In order to match better the word order of the Sanskrit with the English rendering, I have not used Emmerick's translation here.

because of her famous teaching,		
	Her marks and minor marks are grave and solemn, benefiting sentient beings.	
because she is a mine of virtues, because she is pure and supreme,		The wonderful auspiciousness of her genuine virtue
because she is brilliant as a lotus.	Her countenance is pure like a lotus flower.	is like a lotus flower, utterly pure.[26]

While Sarasvatī's speech is praised in the Sanskrit and in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, it is omitted in Yijing, who instead eulogizes her as 'the supreme one.' In the Sanskrit, she is then extolled for the 'excellent, supreme success' she causes, which in the corresponding Chinese passages becomes the gratification of beings (Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta) and the fulfillment of their hearts' desires (Yijing). The goddess's supremacy, raised at the beginning of Yijing's stanza, is then celebrated in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta. Only the Sanskrit praises Sarasvatī's teachings. Her body, according to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta in this stanza and Yijing in the following stanza,[27] is endowed with the distinguishing marks (*xiang* 相, *lakṣaṇa*; and in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta also the minor marks, *hao* 好, *anuvyañjana*) found on the body of the Buddha—high praise indeed for a celestial (天)! [28] Stanza three ends with a eulogy of the goddess's virtue(s), likened in Yijing to a lotus in its purity.

3.4 *Stanza Four*

Sarasvatī's beauty is praised in stanza four, beginning with her eyes in the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta:

sulocanāya nayanottamāya	眼目修禓勝一切	
śubhāśrayāya		
śubhadarśanāya /	身體端正視無厭	身色端嚴皆樂見

[26] Sanskrit, p.110, lines 11–14 (Emmerick 1996, p.48); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c19–21; Yijing, p.437b26–27.

[27] Yijing, p.437b28 衆相希有不思議. See also Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c23 種種莊嚴諸相好, in the following stanza.

[28] On the thirty-two *xiang* (*lakṣaṇa*) and the eighty *hao* (*anuvyañjana*), see Oda 1917, pp.592b–c, 1558b27; Nakamura 1981, p.866b.

guṇair acintyaiḥ samalaṃkṛtāya	種種莊嚴諸相好	衆相希有不思議
candropamāya vimalaprabhāya //	光明清淨如月光	
Because her eyes are fair and excellent, because her residence is beautiful,	She is unmatched in the slenderness and length of her eyes.	
because her appearance is beautiful,	Her body is proper, and we look at it insatiably.	Her bodily aspect is proper and majestic, and all delight in beholding it.
because she is thoroughly adorned with inconceivable virtues,	[Its] various adornments are the marks and the minor marks.[29]	Her marks are rare and inconceivable.[30]
because she resembles the moon, because her splendour is pure.	Her splendour is pure like the moonlight.	

While the Sanskrit also extols her beautiful residence, there is no corresponding passage for this in either of the Chinese versions. Only the first half of Yijing's stanza, furthermore, is analogous to the Sanskrit and to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta. As we shall see, the remainder of his stanza matches, instead, the first *pāda* (foot, quarter) of stanza five.

3.5 *Stanza Five*

This stanza in Kauṇḍinya's praise is completely uneven in content, beginning, quite unsuspectingly, with a eulogy of the goddess's knowledge and memory (3.5.1 below), entirely appropriate to Sarasvatī, and then followed by a likening of her to a lion, a vehicle for men in the Sanskrit, and more mysteriously still, by a description of her as eight-armed (3.5.2 below). The stanza ends, much like the previous one, with a comparison of the goddess to the full moon (3.5.3 below). For purposes of study, stanza five may, therefore, be divided into these three sections.

[29] On *xianghao* 相好 see note 28 above.

[30] Sanskrit, p.111, lines 1–4 (Emmerick 1996, p.48); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c22–23; Yijing, p.437b28.

3.5.1 *Knowledge and Memory*

The first section consists of the first *pāda* of the Sanskrit, which describes the goddess's knowledge and memory:

jñānākarāya smṛti-m-agratāya[31]	智慧悉能遍一切 強記不妄能總持	能放無垢智光明 於諸念中爲最勝
Because she is a mine of knowledge, because of the superiority of her memory,[32]	Her wisdom is all-pervading. Her memory is not false and can hold, [so] she can remember everything.	She emits the stainless light of wisdom, and she excels in all memory/remembering.[33]

While one might interpret all three versions as referring to the goddess's own faculty of memory, what follows in Yijing's rendering suggests that Kauṇḍinya may also be lauding the devotee's remembering of Biancaitian, which is supreme among all rememberings, as the lion is superior among beasts (猶如師子獸中上, 3.5.2 below), reigning over them. The purpose for which the memory of the goddess 'excels,' in that it is 'most victorious' (*zuisheng* 最勝) as stated in Yijing's second line above (於諸念中爲最勝), is indicated not only by the ruler imagery of the lion, king among beasts, but also by the subsequent description of the goddess in warrior aspect, carrying weapons in her eight arms (3.5.2). The *Sutra of Golden Light*, as a text for the protection of the state, is addressed to rulers. Amongst all that comes to one's mind, the memory of the goddess is the most victorious, in that, I presume, it leads to the greatest triumph. Therefore, amidst all thoughts, or more precisely rememberings (*nian* 念), the remembering of the goddess rules, like the lion among beasts, for it leads to the desired conquest. Hence, in Yijing, the lion is likened to the remembering of the goddess, rather than to the goddess herself. And it is exactly for this reason that kings and warriors who seek success in battle should invoke the memory of our fully-armed warrior goddess, for the very memory of her, excelling amongst all others, will lead them to the victory to which they aspire.

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[31] As Nobel notes, in his edition of the Sanskrit (p.111, note 7), the '*m*' of *smṛti-m-agratāya* is a euphonic insertion.

[32] Emmerick translates *smṛti* as 'mindfulness' (1996, p.48), which in this context is certainly inaccurate. I have therefore changed it to 'memory.'

[33] Sanskrit, p.111, line 5 (Emmerick 1996, p.48; see note 32 above); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c24; Yijing, p.437b29.

3.5.2 *Lion and Warrior Goddess*

The comparison with the lion and the eight-armed description of the goddess then appears in the second section of stanza five, constituting the second and third *pāda* of the Sanskrit:

siṃhottamāya[34] *naravāhanāya* / *aṣṭābhir bāhubhir alaṃkṛtāya*	乘師子上現人形 體有八臂莊嚴身	猶如師子獸中上 常以八臂自莊嚴 各持弓箭刀稍斧 長杵鐵輪并羂索
because she is the best of lionesses, because she is a vehicle for men,	Superior to the best of lionesses, she manifests a human form.	Indeed she is superior like the lion among beasts,
because she is adorned with eight arms,	As to [her] physique, she has a body adorned with eight arms.[35]	always self-adorned with eight arms, each holding bow, arrow, sword, long-handled spear, axe, long vajra, iron wheel, and lasso.[36]

Heroes, brave men, and kings are often likened to lions among men. Accordingly, the most valiant hero or king might be the best of lions. However, Sarasvatī is neither a warrior nor a king, nor does she have leonine associations. A goddess who is connected with the lion, having him as her mount, is the warrior goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī, slayer of the buffalo demon Mahiṣa, who is in time identified as Durgā and popularly called Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[37] The Sanskrit stanza, however, does not tell us that the goddess has a lion mount, but rather that she herself is 'the best of lionesses' (*siṃhottama*) and a 'vehicle for man/men' (*naravāhana*). Could this mean that she is the best of warriors and the vehicle, i.e., the means, whereby men who invoke her attain victory

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[34] Some manuscripts read *siddhottamāya* (Sanskrit, p.111, note 8) instead of *siṃhottamāya*, which would make her 'the best of Siddhas,' semi-divine beings endowed with supernatural faculties, or sages. Clearly, the Sanskrit texts used by Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and Yijing must have had *siṃha* and not *siddha*, for they translate it as *shizi* 師子 (p.387c25; p.437c1).

[35] Another possible translation of 體有八臂莊嚴身 is "As to [her] physique, she has an eight-armed majestic body," where 'majestic' *zhuangyan* 莊嚴 goes well with the lionesses in the first part of the passage.

[36] Sanskrit, p.111, lines 6–7 (Emmerick 1996, pp.48–49); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c25; Yijing, p.437c1–2.

[37] Mahiṣāsuramardinī images are discussed in Chapter Twelve below.

in battle? If so, the goddess in question would be a warrior-goddess figure, and not Sarasvatī.

The combination of *siṃhottama* and *naravāhana*, furthermore, necessarily calls to mind Viṣṇu's fourth incarnation Narasiṃha ('man-lion'), who tore apart the powerful demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. The Devī (great Warrior Goddess), according to the eighth-century *Devī Māhātmya*, has the form of Nṛsiṃha (= Narasiṃha) in 91:16 and is called Nārasiṃhī in 88:19, 36, like one of the Mothers (Mātṛ or Mātṛkā).[38] The *pāda* may in fact be read as an interpretation of *narasiṃha*: "best of lions, whose vehicle is man," perhaps pointing to the half-man half-lion form of Narasiṃha, but here applied to a goddess capable of destroying even a powerful demon like Hiraṇyakaśipu. As in our third *pāda*, the image of Narasiṃha, according to the *Matsya Purāṇa* (260:31), should be made eight-armed (*narasiṃhaṃ tu kartavyaṃ bhujāṣṭakasamanvitam*), and post-Gupta eight-armed representations are indeed extant.[39] I will return below to the question of whether or not the eight-armed form mentioned here might belong to Narasiṃha.[40]

Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's *cheng shizi shang* 乘師子上, corresponding to *siṃhottamāya* in the Sanskrit, may, of course, also be read as 'mounted on a lion,' suggesting the goddess whose mount is a lion, Mahiṣāsuramardinī. However, the matching passages, both in the extant Sanskrit as well as in Yijing, require that we look to another possible, and in my view preferable, meaning: since the character *cheng* 乘 means not only 'to mount,' but also 'to be superior to, to excel, to surpass,'[41] *cheng shizi shang* can be read in a completely different way. I had previously translated this passage as "superior like the excelling lion,"[42] interpreting *cheng shizi* 乘師子 as 'excelling lion.' An even better and more literal rendering seems to me now "superior to (*cheng* 乘) the best (*shang* 上) of lions/lionesses (*shizi* 師子)," corresponding more closely to the two other versions (*siṃhottamāya* "because she is the best of lionesses"; 猶如師子獸中上 "indeed she is superior like the lion among beasts"), and indicating a near literal translation of the Sanskrit into Chinese by Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.

[38] On Nārasiṃhī, see Coburn 1984, pp.206–07. On the date of the *Devī Māhātmya*, see Yokochi 1999b and 2004, pp.21–23, note 42.

[39] On Narasiṃha iconography see Desai 1973, pp.84–96; Ducrey Giordano 1977.

[40] See p.200 below.

[41] For *cheng* 乘 in the sense of 'superior' see Morohashi 1955–60, vol.1, p.350c (4); Luo Zhufeng 1986–94, vol.1, p.667 (nos.8–10).

[42] Ludvik 1999–2000, p.299 ("supérieure comme le lion excellent"); 2001, p.243.

In Yijing's rendering, as noted above, the metaphor of the lion amongst beasts serves as an elucidation of the previous line: as the memory of the goddess rules over all other rememberings, just so does the lion reign over all animals. The imagery of the lion, furthermore, is associated with the warrior-ruler, for whom success is victory in battle. The goddess, whose memory 'excels,' in that it is 'most victorious' (*zuisheng* 最勝), perhaps implying that it leads to military success, is therefore herself appropriately described as an eight-armed, weapon-bearing warrior, to whose form the targeted audience of the *Sutra of Golden Light* may more readily respond.

The big question here is whether there is any way that this depiction of the goddess might be related to Sarasvatī. We know that she is not a battle deity and that she does not carry weapons.[43] The only Indian text in which a combative aspect of Sarasvatī emerges is the *Ṛg Veda*, where the powerful river goddess is invoked to conquer enemies and also compared to Indra.[44] This facet, however, does not re-surface in subsequent Vedic, epic, or early Puranic texts, where, as we have seen, Sarasvatī is transformed into a benevolent goddess of knowledge. Would the *Sutra of Golden Light*, in the extant Sanskrit and in the versions represented by the Chinese translations of Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and Yijing—over two thousand years removed in time from the *Ṛg Veda*—have drawn on an aspect of the goddess that amongst the Hindus had been left behind, seemingly forgotten? Would the Buddhists have been studying the *Ṛg Veda* and its complex language so closely? Given that, in the first part of the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, she is, just as in post-*Ṛg Veda* Vedic, epic, and early Puranic texts, represented as goddess of eloquence and knowledge, and that no sign of a combative attitude can be detected in her in either the first or the second part of the chapter, I do not think it is likely that Kauṇḍinya's praise of Sarasvatī draws on the warrior aspect of the river goddess as depicted in the *Ṛg Veda*. It is there-

[43] The primarily South Indian sculptures of Sarasvatī from the twelfth century onward, including the dancing form, which depict her holding, in addition to her other attributes, weapons such as the stick and the noose, are considerably later and entirely unrelated to this eight-armed form in Yijing. In these images, Sarasvatī does not hold exclusively weapons, and she is immediately identifiable by her characteristic manuscript, appropriate to the goddess of knowledge, her *vīṇā*, and her mount the *haṃsa*—altogether unlike the battle goddess described in Yijing. See, for example, the sculpture in the Lakṣmī-Narasiṃha Temple of Hosaholalu, Mandya, Karnataka (K. Bhattacharyya 1983, pl.32) and the sculpture from Haḷebiḍ now in the Indian Museum in Kolkata (ibid., pl.20).

[44] See pp.15, 48 above.

fore necessary to look to another goddess, i.e., a battle goddess, for an understanding of this and other passages of the chapter.

While the iconographic description of the weapon-wielding goddess found in Yijing, seemingly derived from a no-longer-extant Sanskrit version, does not correspond to any known Indian representation of Sarasvatī, matching Chinese and Japanese images do in fact exist. Yijing's depiction of the goddess, here, comprises the textual basis for the eight-armed form of the Chinese Sarasvatī, Biancai tiannü, of which a very small number of examples are known to survive, and likewise of her Japanese equivalent, Benzaiten 辯才天, whose images, ranging from the eighth century (fig.25) to the present, exist in considerable numbers.[45] Hence we have representations of Sarasvatī's Chinese/Japanese counterpart appearing in a form that does not belong to Sarasvatī.

As noted above,[46] Narasiṃha, suggested by *siṃhottamāya naravāhanāya*, is also described and depicted as eight-armed in some of the surviving post-Gupta images. He does not carry eight weapons, however, like our goddess in Yijing, because two to four of his arms are engaged in holding, striking, and tearing out the entrails of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, while the others wield some of Viṣṇu's characteristic implements, including the disc, the lotus, the mace, and the conch, or also the sword and the shield.[47] Clearly, the list of weapons in Yijing does not correspond to Narasiṃha's iconography.

With regard to our eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess, an analogous figure appears in the sixth- to seventh-century *Skanda Purāṇa*[48] as Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī: *bibharti sā bhujān aṣṭau sāyudhān aparājitā* // (58:12cd).[49] Kauśikī is born from the sloughed dark skin of Pārvatī, as noted above, and sent to take up residence in the Vindhya mountains (Vindhyavāsinī). We do not have a complete list of her weapons, however, for only the bow and two quivers are mentioned (*nibaddhatūṇīrayugā pragṛhītaśarāsanā* /).[50] Furthermore, numerous examples of eight-armed, weapon-bearing Mahiṣāsuramardinī are extant, not only in India, but also in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. The relationships of all of these connected goddesses (Vindhyavāsinī, Pārvatī, Kauśikī, and Mahiṣāsuramardinī) are taken up below, following the discussion of the praise sections recited by Kauṇḍinya in the sutra. Images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, moreover, are examined in Chapter Twelve of the present study.

[45] A study of Chinese and Japanese sculptural and pictorial representations of the goddess in relation to Yijing's eight-armed description appears in my dissertation (Ludvik 2001, pp.245–78).

[46] See p.198 above.

[47] On Narasiṃha iconography see Desai 1973, pp.84–96; Ducrey Giordano 1977.

[48] On the date of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, see Yokochi 2004, pp.25–26.

[49] See Yokochi 2004, p.260. See also *Skanda Purāṇa* 63:55c (*aṣṭabāhuḥ*) in Yokochi 2004, p.285. Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī is here likewise endowed with weapons, as mentioned in the following stanza 63:56b (*sarvapraharaṇāni ca*).

[50] *Skanda Purāṇa* 58:14ab in Yokochi 2004, p.260.

There is no doubt here, I would say, that Sarasvatī, after emitting the stainless light of wisdom in Yijing (p.437b29), was all of a sudden left behind, and that a battle goddess has taken her place (p.437b29–c2). However, we promptly return to our familiar Sarasvatī in the third and final section of this stanza.

3.5.3 *Full Moon*

In this section, consisting of the fourth *pāda*, the goddess's appearance is likened to the full moon, as at the end of the previous stanza (*candropamāya vimalaprabhāya*).[51] The Sanskrit and the Chinese versions read:

pūrṇaśaśāṅkopamadarśanāya //	衆生見者如滿月	端正樂見如滿月
because her appearance is like that of the full moon.	Beings see her as the full moon.	Proper, she is beheld with joy like the full moon.[52]

Although Yijing succeeds in somehow unifying stanza five, if we interpret the lion as a metaphor for the excelling memory of the goddess, the same cannot be said of the two other versions of the sutra. In the case of the Sanskrit, since stanza five ends with a kind of reiteration of what appears at the end of stanza four, and since stanza six deals once again with speech and wisdom, I wonder if the second and third *pāda* of stanza five (*siṃhottamāya naravāhanāya* / *aṣṭābhir bāhubhir alaṃkṛtāya*) might not have been added later. A confirmation of this suspicion may be found in stanza six, which, unlike all the other stanzas that have only four *pāda*, consists of six *pāda* in the Sanskrit. Two *pāda* of stanza six may, in an earlier version of the Sanskrit sutra, have been combined with the first and the fourth *pāda* of stanza five, to form a regular four-*pāda* stanza. This explanation, however, does not do away with the apparently redundant repetition of the likening of the goddess to the full moon in the last *pāda* of both stanzas four and five. The gradual expansion of the *Sutra of Golden Light* was clearly a very complex process.

[51] Sanskrit, p.111, line 4 .

[52] Sanskrit, p.111, line 8 (Emmerick 1996, p.49); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c26; Yijing, p.437c3.

3.6 *Stanza Six*

Back in what is clearly Sarasvatī territory, Kauṇḍinya now praises her speech, voice, wisdom, and so on.

manojñavākyāya	語言辯了聲微妙	言詞無滯出和音
mṛdusvarāya		
gambhīraprajñāya	智慧甚深難思議	
samanvitāya /	以此智慧恒圓滿	
kāryāgrasādhanakarāya	能施衆生一切願	若有衆生心願求
susattvatāya	於一切衆最爲尊	善事隨念令圓滿

Because of her heartening speech,	Her speech is clear,	Her words do not stagnate,
because of her soft voice,	her voice is delicate, and	and they emit harmonious sounds.
because she is endowed with profound wisdom,	her wisdom is very profound and difficult to conceive. With this wisdom always full,	
because she causes the accomplishment of the best deeds,	she has the ability to bestow on beings all [their] wishes.	If there are beings whose hearts seek after acting excellently, in accordance with [their] thoughts, she allows the fulfillment [thereof].[53]
because she is an excellent being,	Amongst all beings she is the most venerable;	

While all three versions praise the goddess's speech and voice, Yijing alone omits her wisdom. Whereas the Sanskrit describes her as causing the accomplishment of the best deeds, in the Chinese translations she fulfills the wishes of beings. She herself is an excellent being (*susattva*) in the Sanskrit, the most venerable of all beings (於一切衆最爲尊) according to Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta.[54] Kauṇḍinya then provides a list of the beings who consequently worship and praise the goddess:

devāsurendrair api	帝釋修羅諸天等	帝釋諸天咸供養
pūjitāya /	乾闥婆等及夜叉	
sarvasurāsuragaṇālaya-	一切大衆恒讚嘆	皆共稱讚可歸依
varṇitāya		

[53] Sanskrit, p.111, lines 9–11 (Emmerick 1996, p.49); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c26–28; Yijing, p.437c3–4.

[54] Cf. the first stanza of the eight-stanza praise, where Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.387c15) render the Sanskrit *pravarottamāgradevī* "supreme, chief, excellent goddess" (p.110, line 5) as 一切最爲尊.

bhūtagaṇālaya sadā		衆德能生不思議
sampūjitāya //		一切時中起恭敬
svāhā //		莎訶[55]

because she is honoured by the lords of gods and Asuras,	Dishi (Śakra/Indra), the Asuras, Devas, etc., Gandharvas, etc., Yakṣas;	Dishi (Śakra) and the gods all worship [her].
because she is praised in all the dwellings of a multitude of gods and Asuras,	all the great assemblies continuously praise [her].	All together they praise [her] well and turn [to her] for refuge.
because she is continually worshipped in the abode of a multitude of Bhūtas.		The virtues she is able to generate are inconceivable. Throughout all times she arouses veneration.
Hail! (*svāhā*)		*Svāhā*.[56]

The Chinese versions have different lists, a rather long one in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and a particularly short one in Yijing, who includes only Śakra and the gods. Although the source for the presence of Indra (Śakra) in both Chinese versions might be reduced to a misreading of the Sanskrit *devāsurendraiḥ* "by the lords (*indra*) of gods and demons," where the plural makes it clear that the reference is not to the one god Indra, but to the various lords, it is more likely that the Sanskrit they were working from in fact had Indra in this stanza. At least Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta most probably had a different reading, given that their list is longer than what we find in the extant Sanskrit, including also Gandharvas, Yakṣas, and so on.

The presence of the Bhūtas in the Sanskrit calls back to mind the first stanza of this longer praise, where Kauṇḍinya begins by addressing the Bhūtas: *śṛṇvantu me bhūtagaṇāḥ* "May all the hordes of Bhūtas hear me."[57] The Bhūtas, it should be noted, are not the usual attendants of Sarasvatī, but rather of the mountain goddess Vindhyavāsinī, who is invoked in the *Harivaṃśa* hymn recited by Yijing's Kauṇḍinya immediately preceding the eight-stanza praise.[58]

[55] An interlinear note regarding recitation procedure follows.

[56] Sanskrit, p.111, lines 12–14 (Emmerick 1996, p.49); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, pp.387c29–388a1; Yijing, p.437c5–7.

[57] Sanskrit, p.110, line 3.

[58] See pp.209ff. below, and especially Ludvik 2006.

3.7 *Stanza Seven*

This stanza appears only in the extant Sanskrit and in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, but does find its parallel in a prose passage put in the mouth of the Buddha at the end of Yijing's eight-stanza praise (p.437c11–12). Kauṇḍinya invokes the goddess to pray for success in all his undertakings—good fortune in the Chinese—and for protection:

ahaṃ devīm imāṃ namasyāmi sā me prayacchatu guṇaugham viśiṣṭam /	我某甲等當恭敬 供養清淨殷重心	讚彼天女請求
siddhiṃ mama pradadātu sarvakārye	以此願故皆吉祥	加護獲福無邊
nityaṃ ca rakṣatu māṃ śatrumadhye //	於怖畏處恒防護	
I bow down to this goddess.	I, a certain person, etc., revere and worship [her] with pure and deep heart.	[The Buddha:] Praising the goddess and praying [to her],
May she give me a special mass of virtues.		
May she grant me success in every act. May she continually protect me in the midst of enemies.	By means of this wish, all will be auspicious. In fearful places, she always provides protection.	you will obtain protection and your good fortune will be boundless.[59]

While protection is the kind of request anyone might make, especially in times of fear, protection 'in the midst of enemies' (*śatrumadhye*) seems more appropriate to a warrior in the middle of a battle rather than to a Brahman like Kauṇḍinya.

3.8 *Stanza Eight*

This final stanza is in fact not technically a part of Kauṇḍinya's hymn of praise, but rather what is termed in Sanskrit as *phalastuti*, a stanza explaining the benefits to be acquired from reciting this hymn:

etān samāptākṣara-pūrṇavākyān	若復有人於晨朝 清淨誦此七言偈	若欲祈請辯才天 依此呪讚言詞句

[59] Sanskrit, p.111, lines 15–18 (Emmerick 1996, p.49); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.388a1–3; Yijing, p.437c11–12.

kalyaṃ samutthāya śucir bravīti /		晨朝清淨至誠誦
sarvābhiprāyadhana-dhānyalābhī	我令是人悉滿願	於所求事悉隨心
siddhiṃ ca prāpnoti śivām udārām //	須者給與無所乏	
(If) one rises up in the morning, and, pure, utters these words full of perfect syllables,	If there be people who at dawn with purity recite these seven-character *gāthā*,	If one wishes to invoke the Eloquence Talent Deity, one [should] resort to these spell(s) and praise(s), words and phrases. At dawn, with purity and utmost sincerity, one [should] recite [them].
one obtains all desires, wealth and grain, and one gains splendid, noble success.	I will let these people have complete fulfillment of [their] wishes. All [their] necessities I will supply, and I will make them lack nothing.	One's desires will all be fulfilled in accordance with one's heart.[60]

Since the chapter ends here in the extant Sanskrit, one might interpret this stanza to refer to the entire *parivarta*, but the fact that it is in verse, like the previous seven stanzas, would suggest that it refers only to Kauṇḍinya's eight-stanza praise. Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta do indeed specify that it is only 'these seven-character *gāthā*' (此七言偈)—verses consisting of seven characters each—that are to be recited in the early morning. Although the first quarter of Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's hymn (p.387c11–19, corresponding to the first two and the beginning of the third stanza) is composed in five-character units, it may nevertheless be presumed that they meant the entire eight-stanza praise, and not just the latter three quarters of it (pp.387c20–388a5) in seven-character verse.[61] Yijing—all of whose praise passages (three-stanza praise, *Harivaṃśa* hymn, and eight-stanza praise), it might be noted, are consistently set in these seven-character verses—is more comprehensive in his stipulations

[60] Sanskrit, p.112, lines 1–4 (Emmerick 1996, p.49: note that I have changed Emmerick's translation of *etān samāptākṣarapūrṇavākyān*, which he renders as "these complete syllables and full words"); Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.388a3–5; Yijing, p.437c8–9.

[61] Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's three-stanza praise, furthermore, appears in four-character verses. Although a study of the various types of Chinese verses selected by the translators to render the Sanskrit praise sections would be a fascinating subject to examine, it is beyond the scope of the present volume.

of what is to be recited at dawn: he includes both the spell(s) (呪), probably referring to the spell taught by the goddess following Kauṇḍinya's three-stanza praise, as well as the 'praises, words and phrases' or 'the words and phrases of praise' (讃言詞句),[62] which may mean the three-stanza praise, the *Harivaṃśa* hymn, and the eight-stanza praise.

As to what is to be gained from reciting Kauṇḍinya's praise verses, our three versions say that all of the reciter's desires will be fulfilled. The Sanskrit adds, as we see above, that he will obtain wealth and grain, as well as 'splendid, noble success.' The Chinese translations then supply concluding statements in prose. In Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, following the recitation of the *gāthā*, Kauṇḍinya proclaims: "May all beings develop the heart of *anuttara samyak sambodhi* [highest perfect awakening]" (令一切衆悉發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心).[63] In Yijing, it is the Buddha himself who addresses Kauṇḍinya, praising him for having benefited all beings. He assures the Brahman that by praising and praying to the goddess, he will obtain protection and his good fortune will be boundless.[64]

Before turning our attention to the sections of Kauṇḍinya's praise that amongst the versions of the sutra studied here are exclusive to Yijing, it may be useful to recapitulate the instances in which a different goddess is, or appears to be, invoked under Sarasvatī's name in the praise sections held in common by the extant Sanskrit and the two Chinese versions, i.e., the shorter three-stanza praise and the longer eight-stanza praise:

1. three-stanza praise, stanza one (Sanskrit, p.108, line 5; Yijing, p.436a5): the attribute *mahātapā* 'of great heat/energy,' to which corresponds *yongjin* 勇進 'brave energy,' is a characteristic more appropriate to Pārvatī.

2. three-stanza praise, stanza two (Sanskrit, p.108, lines 7–8; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387b13–14; Yijing, p.436a7–8): the description of the goddess as dwelling on a mountain peak, wearing grass garments, and standing on one foot likewise befits Pārvatī.

3. eight-stanza praise, stanza five (Sanskrit, p.111, lines 6–7 ; Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.387c25; Yijing, p.437b29–c2): the characterization of the goddess as the best of lionesses or, in Yijing, as one whose remembrance is like a lion amongst beasts; as a vehicle for men in the Sanskrit; as eight-armed, and in Yijing wielding weapons, agrees with the *Skanda Purāṇa*'s Kauṣikī-Vindhyavāsinī, as well as with images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

4. eight-stanza praise, stanza one (Sanskrit, p.110, line 3) and stanza six (Sanskrit, p.111, line 14): Bhūtas, who are specifically addressed in stanza one and mentioned again in stanza six, are the usual attendants of Vindhyavāsinī.

Hence, we find indications of the presence of ascetic goddess Pārvatī, of warrior goddess Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī or Mahiṣāsuramardinī, and of local mountain goddess Vindhyavāsinī. By the middle of the fifth century, therefore, if Nobel's dating of the extant Sanskrit sutra is correct, these goddesses, all brought into relationship in Hindu textual sources by the sixth to seventh century,[65] had made a brief, veiled appearance in the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. In the *Harivaṃśa* hymn (5. below), which is translated in Yijing, furthermore, we will encounter Vindhyavāsinī again, who will become the connecting link between Pārvatī and Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

As it will be recalled, Yijing has three additional sections to the ones he holds in common with the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta: the rite corresponding to the spell taught by Sarasvatī (4. below); the just mentioned *Harivaṃśa* hymn (5. below); and the words of praise to be recited by those who wish to invoke Sarasvatī's compassion and protection (6. below). These three sections, as noted earlier, also appear in the ninth-century Tibetan translation (Tib. II)[66] from a Sanskrit version more extensive than the surviving one edited by Nobel, and in complete translations from Yijing (e.g., Tib. III).

4. Spell Rite

Yijing, pp.436b8–437a1

Here, the Eloquence Talent Goddess begins by praising the Brahman for seeking wonderful eloquence, rare treasures, supernatural penetrations,

[62] Yijing, p.437c8–9.
[63] Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, p.388a6–7.
[64] Yijing, p.437c10–12. Lines c11–12 are quoted and translated on p.204 above in the main text.
[65] Discussed below on pp.212–14.
[66] See chart in Nobel 1958a, p.228.

and wisdom to benefit all beings, so that they may attain awakening. She then explains the rite that accompanies the previously stated spell, which Kauṇḍinya will know, receive, and maintain.[67]

One should begin by taking refuge in the Three Jewels and in a multitude of gods, requesting for protection and for the fulfillment of ones wishes. One is to pay homage to Buddhas and various other beings. Then, one should recite the spell aloud in a secluded hermitage, making offerings before the image of a Buddha, a god, or a dragon deity (Nāga). The goddess gives directions for contemplation and concentration, telling the performer of the rite to sit before an image of the Buddha.

She interrupts her instructions for a moment to praise the golden mouth, the tongue-quality (*lakṣaṇa*), and the wonderful voice of the Buddha[68]—all related to eloquence, over which the goddess presides. When she sees someone worshipping her or following the teachings of his master, she conveys to him this secret rite, which leads to the fulfillment of all his wishes (若見供養辯才天　或見弟子隨師教　授此秘法令修學　尊重隨心皆得成).[69]

The goddess then turns back to her instructions for the rite, specifying the purity of place and clothing, and how the altar should be adorned. Offerings are to be made to the Buddha and to our deity, and, having requested to behold [their] celestial forms, all the petitioner's wishes will be fulfilled (供養佛及辯才天　求見天身皆遂願).[70] The practitioner is to recite the spell for three-times-seven (3 x 7) days, facing the Great Eloquence Deity (大辯天神前).[71] If he does not see the goddess, he should persevere for nine days.[72]

If that too fails, he should look for another place to practise and there draw an image of the goddess according to prescriptions (如法應畫辯才天),[73] make offerings, and recite the spell day and night. If yet again he does not succeed, he should keep asking [to see the goddess] for three months, six months, nine months, or a year. After that he will obtain the 'celestial eye' (*tianyan* 天眼), evidently in order to see the goddess, and he will [know] the minds of others (*ta xin* 他心).[74]

[67] Yijing, p.436b8–11 善哉大士。能爲衆生。求妙辯才及諸珍寶神通智慧。廣利一切。速證菩提。如是應知。受持法式。
[68] Yijing, p.436b25–c1.
[69] Yijing, p.436c2–3.
[70] Yijing, p.436c13.
[71] Yijing, p.436c14.
[72] Yijing, p.436c15 若其不見此天神　應更用心經九日.
[73] Yijing, p.436c17.
[74] Yijing, p.437a1. On the meaning of *ta xin* 他心 as *ta xinzhi* 他心智 see Nobel

We have here, then, a spell-recitation rite wherein an image of the Eloquence Talent Goddess is used and wherein the practitioner strives to have a vision of her. Although the individual is told to draw her image according to prescriptions (如法應畫辯才天),[75] no directions are given, nor is the form of the goddess specified. The fact that her image is to be drawn 'according to prescriptions' (*ru fa* 如法), however, indicates that these prescriptions already existed, probably within a Buddhist ritual manual, when Yijing's version of the Sanskrit was composed. Nevertheless, the possibility that the Chinese translators themselves added the specification *ru fa*, assuming that it was implied, cannot be discarded, since we do not have a copy of the Sanskrit text they were working from.[76]

5. *Harivaṃśa* Hymn

Yijing, p.437a6–b20

Following the goddess's instructions for the spell rite, Yijing's Kauṇḍinya recommences praising the goddess, reciting a hymn from the *Harivaṃśa* (third to fourth century)[77] in twenty-two stanzas. I have discussed elsewhere this *Harivaṃśa* hymn and Yijing's Chinese translation of it,[78] and hence I will limit myself here to a brief introduction of its Sanskrit and Chinese versions, and to a summary of its contents. This will be followed by a discussion of the relationships of the goddesses appearing in Kauṇḍinya's praises (three-stanza, *Harivaṃśa* hymn, and eight-stanza) and of the reasons for their presence in the sutra under the guise of Sarasvatī/Biancaitian.

1958a, p.248, note 1. Cf. also the final stanzas of the Sanskrit version of the *Harivaṃśa* hymn (Ludvik 2006, pp.91–92), which are not included in Yijing's translation of the hymn. The same numbers of months (three, six, nine) of continued practice are mentioned in the Sanskrit, and after nine months, the promised fruit is likewise the 'celestial eye' (*divyaṃ cakṣuḥ*). Since, immediately following the goddess's explanation of the *dhāraṇī* rite, Yijing's Kauṇḍinya launches into a praise of the Eloquence Talent Goddess in the form of a Chinese translation of this very *Harivaṃśa* hymn, Nobel (1958a, p.248, note 2) suggests that Yijing's pp.436c20–437a1 are based on the final lines of this *Harivaṃśa* hymn.
[75] Yijing, p.436c17.
[76] The Tibetan, Nobel (1958a, p.247, note 6) points out, does not have the specification 'according to prescriptions.'
[77] On the growth of the *Harivaṃśa* and the dates assigned to it, see Brockington 1998, pp.326–32.
[78] Ludvik 2006.

5.1 *The Hymn*

Within the *Harivaṃśa*, the hymn is set in the context of Kṛṣṇa's birth story and invokes the goddess Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī.[79] Nidrā (Sleep) is the personification of the abstract concept of Viṣṇu's yogic sleep and deluding power (*māyā*). In the birth story, Nidrā is transformed into the Vindhya-dwelling goddess, who is surrounded by Bhūtas and wild animals, worshipped by tribesmen and thieves, and who delights in flesh and liquor. The *Harivaṃśa* is the earliest extant textual source on Vindhyavāsinī, at a point where she is being integrated into the Hindu pantheon. She may be derived, as Yuko Yokochi suggests, from the female spirits inhabiting the Vindhya, who all merged into one.[80] Our hymn, addressed to Vindhyavāsinī as a transformation of Nidrā, is a later addition to the *Harivaṃśa*, representing a stage wherein Vindhyavāsinī's position within the pantheon is being strengthened. In association with other goddesses, including Pārvatī and Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Vindhyavāsinī evolves, in time, into the great Goddess in warrior aspect popularly called Durgā.[81]

Our *Harivaṃśa* hymn appears in Yijing's Chinese rendering from Sanskrit, as well as in some of the Tibetan translations from Sanskrit and from Yijing's Chinese, but it is not found in the extant Sanskrit *Sutra of Golden Light*.[82] The presence of the Hindu hymn in a Buddhist context is not surprising, given that the Indic Buddhist cosmos is populated with numerous Indic deities of Vedic, Brahmanical, Hindu, as well as folk origin. The recontextualized hymn, however, loses not only its Kṛṣṇa-story contours, which give sense to its internal references to the birth narrative, but also its purpose of solidifying Vindhyavāsinī's position in the Hindu pantheon, and, to top it all, even its goddess. In the context of the sutra, the hymn is dedicated to Sarasvatī, the deity of eloquence and knowledge, functioning as a protector of the Dharma by endowing the preacher of the sutra with eloquence and memory, as we have seen, so that the *Sutra of Golden Light* will not become extinct. In Yijing's translation, the hymn is metamorphosed into a different cultural idiom, meaningful in a different cultural context, and addressed to Sarasvatī's Chinese counterpart Biancai tiannü.

[79] See *Harivaṃśa* crit. ed., vol.2, app.1, pp.34–37. English translation in Ludvik 2006, pp.81–92, and Coburn 1984, pp.279–81; French translation in Couture 1991, pp.353–55.
[80] Yokochi 2004, pp.18–19.
[81] On Vindhyavāsinī, see especially Yokochi 2004, but also Baldissera 1996 and Humes 1996.
[82] Why the hymn does not appear in the extant Sanskrit sutra when it survives in Chinese and Tibetan translations from Sanskrit raises some interesting questions. See pp.220–21 below.

The hymn calls the goddess by various names resonant of Vedic and post-Vedic tradition, which are intended, in the Sanskrit, to strengthen Vindhyavāsinī's position in the Hindu pantheon, rendering her worthy of worship among the twice-born. The goddess of this hymn is invoked as Nārāyaṇī (Naluoyan 那羅延, Yijing's line a6),[83] the spouse of Viṣṇu, called 'venerable one' (*zunzhe* 尊者, line a7, for Āryā 'Noble One'), and identified as the mother capable of generating beings (line a9). She is the "brave-fierce constantly-going (one) of great energy" (勇猛常行大精進, line a9; *ugracārī mahātapāḥ*). It will be remembered that we have already come across the characterization of the goddess as *mahātapā* in Kauṇḍinya's three-stanza praise (Sanskrit, p.108, line 5), rendered in Yijing (p.436a5) as *yongjin* 勇進 'brave energy,' quite possibly an abbreviation of *yongmeng jingjin* 勇猛精進 (one of the ten virtues of the Master of the Law),[84] which we now find here with three intervening characters. While Yijing's choice of characters was likely influenced by the attested combination *yongmeng jingjin* in connection with the career of the Bodhisattva, the *Harivaṃśa* hymn referred rather to a fierce-going deity practising, as Pārvatī, great *tapas*.[85]

The goddess in our hymn lives on mountain cliffs in deep and dangerous places, in caves, on riverbanks, in trees and groves (lines a14–15). She is revered by folk from mountains, forests, and wilds (i.e., Śabaras, Barbaras, and Pulindas) (lines a16–17), and surrounded by wild animals (line a18). She is worshipped on the ninth and the eleventh of the dark fortnight (or the ninth of the dark fortnight and the eleventh of the bright fortnight) (line a21).

Among young women, she is supreme *brahman*-practice, i.e., celibacy (line b1), and among adult females, she is Pārvatī (line b11). As a youthful goddess she is always desireless (line b12). In the birth-story of Kṛṣṇa, she is his younger sister (line a22) and the daughter of cowherd Nanda (line a24).

This goddess is also of a combative nature: she fights in battlefields and is always victorious (line a10); she carries a trident (line a20); she is most victorious and unsurpassable (line a23); she fights alongside the

[83] Unless otherwise specified, all references to the hymn here are to Yijing's version.
[84] See pp.184–85 above.
[85] For a discussion of this line as found in Yijing and in the *Harivaṃśa*, see Ludvik 2006, pp.24–28.

gods and always wins (line a24).[86] Her deeds surpass the world (line a13). Not only is she harmony and endurance, but also violence and evil (line a25). She has sovereignty in the worlds (line a6) and among gods and hermits (line a27). She is also the head of Nāgas and Yakṣas (line a29).

What this deity holds in common with Sarasvatī are knowledge and eloquence. She has penetrated the teachings of the four Vedas and magic incantations (line a26). She is endowed with learning (line b3), quick understanding and eloquence, and provides hearing-and-keeping (*dhāraṇī*) (line b8). Amongst other qualities, she is knowledge and intelligence (line a9). In eloquence she excels like Vālmīki (Gaofeng 高峰 'High Peak'), traditional author of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic, and in memory like Dvaipāyana (Zhouzhu 洲渚 'Island'), traditional author of the *Mahābhārata* (line b4). When uttering words, she is Prajāpati (Shijianzhu 世間主 'ruler of the world') (line b1).

The appearance of this *Harivaṃśa* hymn in Yijing's translation of the sutra allows us to establish that it was composed prior to 695, the date of Yijing's return from India and Southeast Asia with the Sanskrit manuscript on which his 703 translation of the sutra was based.[87] The contents suggest that it was likely produced prior to the sixth- to seventh-century *Skanda Purāṇa*, which is chronologically our next source on Vindhyavāsinī. If the *Harivaṃśa* hymn postdates the third- to fourth-century *Harivaṃśa* and predates the *Skanda Purāṇa*, then it may tentatively and very roughly be placed in the fifth century.

5.2 Skanda Purāṇa

In the Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī myth cycle of this Śaivaite *Skanda Purāṇa*, extensively studied by Yokochi (2004), Pārvatī's sloughed dark skin (*kośī*) gives birth to Kauśikī, who is then directed by Pārvatī to take up residence in the Vindhya mountains (Vindhyavāsinī).[88] Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī is eight-armed and endowed with all kinds of weapons as well as armour.[89] As a noble warrior, she rides a chariot drawn by lions and adorned with white parasols and chowries. The Purāṇa describes at length her battle

[86] On the other hand, when she sees battle, her heart is grieved (line a22).

[87] Although it is most likely that Yijing himself brought this Sanskrit version of the sutra to China, there are other possibilities. See pp.256–57 below.

[88] *Skanda Purāṇa* 58:7–8, 22 in Yokochi 2004, pp.259, 261.

[89] *Skanda Purāṇa* 58:12–14; 63:55–56. See p.200 above.

with the demons Sumbha and Nisumbha.[90] Her army consists of terrifying manifestations of herself: armed females who spring from her limbs and lead troops of bird- and animal-headed women (the Mothers, local goddesses being integrated into Vindhyavāsinī).[91] The Purāṇa also includes a short account of her one-on-one battle with the buffalo demon Mahiṣa, thereby identifying Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī with the already existing Mahiṣāsuramardinī, as Kuṣāṇa- and Gupta-period images of the buffalo-slaying goddess, including eight-armed ones, attest.[92]

The warrior aspect of Vindhyavāsinī is considerably developed in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, where she is identified (although not yet fully integrated) with another warrior goddess, Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[93] As Yokochi explains, her status has risen dramatically from a local goddess being introduced into the Hindu pantheon to a goddess of higher rank with multiple local manifestations of her own, as the goddesses emanated from her body (local Mothers) are formally assigned countries and cities.[94] The process initiated in the *Harivaṃśa* and continued on a much grander scale in the *Skanda Purāṇa* culminates in the eighth-century *Devī Māhātmya*, where the Warrior Goddess, derived from the demon-slaying Vindhyavāsinī and Mahiṣāsuramardinī, is revealed.[95] Durgā becomes one of her popular epithets between the sixth to the eighth century, and then her principal name roughly around the tenth century.[96]

In the process of the development of the Warrior Goddess, Kauṇḍinya's praise in the sutra appears to correspond to an early stage in the composition of the sixth- to seventh-century *Skanda Purāṇa*, wherein Vindhyavāsinī is already connected with Pārvatī's *tapas* and has acquired a warrior character that is not yet clearly defined. In fact, it may even correspond to a period slightly prior to the sixth century, when the associa-

[90] *Skanda Purāṇa* 64–66. Critically edited chapters 64 and 66 appear in Yokochi 2004, pp.288–303; English summaries of chapters 64–66 on pp.184–89.

[91] On the Mothers (Mātṛ) of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, see Yokochi 2004, pp.99–113.

[92] *Skanda Purāṇa* 68:10–13 in Yokochi 1999a, pp.90–92 (critically edited Sanskrit and English translation). Mahiṣāsuramardinī images are discussed below in Chapter Twelve.

[93] As Yokochi notes (2004, p.19), Mahiṣāsuramardinī is very likely connected with the slaying of buffalo as sacrificial offerings to goddesses, and there might have been more than one goddess to whom this descriptive epithet was applied. By the Kuṣāṇa period, however, there was clearly one specific Mahiṣāsuramardinī with a set iconography, as attested by extant images. On Asko Parpola's views of the buffalo-slaying goddess and her connections with Vedic Vāc and even Ishtar, see Parpola 1992.

[94] *Skanda Purāṇa* 68:1–9 in Yokochi 2004, pp.316–17; English summary on p.191.

[95] On the Warrior Goddess of the *Devī Māhātmya*, see Yokochi 1999b.

[96] Yokochi 2004, p.8, note 14 (started on p.7), pp.16–18, and personal communication on 26 February 2005.

tions and conceptions embodied in the Purāṇa were developing. As we have seen, in the three-stanza praise (stanzas one and two), mountain-dwelling, *tapas*-practising Pārvatī makes an appearance. In the eight-stanza praise (stanza five), an eight-armed warrior goddess corresponding to the *Skanda Purāṇa*'s Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī and closely related to images of eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī—who in the Purāṇa is identified with Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī—lends her form to Sarasvatī. The eight-stanza praise, furthermore, is specifically addressed to Bhūtas, who are Vindhyavāsinī's usual attendants. Lastly, our *Harivaṃśa* hymn is dedicated to Vindhyavāsinī as a transformation of Nidrā. In light of the development of the Warrior Goddess, and especially as reflected in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, therefore, connecting all the goddesses who appear in the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light* is not a problem. Their presence under the guise of Sarasvatī/Biancaitian in the sutra context, however, raises questions about the relationship of Sarasvatī and Vindhyavāsinī, and the developing Warrior Goddess.

5.3 *Sarasvatī, Vindhyavāsinī, and the Developing Warrior Goddess*

When Vindhyavāsinī was being introduced into the Hindu pantheon and her position within it was being strengthened, in addition to her consecration by Indra and her adoption as his sister in the main text of the *Harivaṃśa*, she was called by names resonant of Vedic and post-Vedic tradition to render her worthy of worship among the twice-born. Sarasvatī, as the Vedic river goddess identified with Speech and transformed into goddess of knowledge, was a desirable candidate to be connected with. In the *Harivaṃśa* hymn, as we have seen,[97] Vindhyavāsinī was endowed with knowledge, understanding, intelligence, memory, and eloquence, qualities which Sarasvatī as Vāc embodies. Even Sarasvatī's name appears in the hymn as a substantive with which Vindhyavāsinī is identified: "and [you are] the eloquent speech of Vālmīki" (*sarasvatī ca vālmīkeḥ*; 辯才勝出若高峰).[98] In subsequent hymns and texts, the (developing or fully developed) Warrior Goddess is likewise associated with

[97] See p.212 above.

[98] Sanskrit stanza 15 (line 29) and Chinese stanza 14 (line b4) discussed in Ludvik 2006, pp.54–57.

Sarasvatī and other related goddesses, such as Sāvitrī.[99] It is reasonable to surmise that the appearance of the substantive *sarasvatī* in the *Harivaṃśa* hymn may well have influenced the decision by the sutra compiler(s) to include it in the Sarasvatī chapter of the sutra. The hymn, it should be noted, while it clearly derives from the *Harivaṃśa* context, may well have circulated independently and been used to invoke different goddesses whose names appear therein.

In terms of Vindhyavāsinī and Sarasvatī, then, for the Vindhya-dwelling tribal goddess, identification with Sarasvatī serves the purpose of solidifying her position within the Hindu pantheon. This same purpose, however, is not served in a Buddhist sutra. Within the common Indic religious cosmos, it is under the influence of Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī's growing status, which will eventually culminate in the Warrior Goddess popularly called Durgā, that we find Pārvatī, Vindhyavāsinī, as well as the form of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, in the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

To consider what Sarasvatī has to gain from the demon-killing warrior goddesses Vindhyavāsinī and Mahiṣāsuramardinī, on the other hand, we must look to the context of the sutra. The Four Great Kings of our *Sutra of Golden Light* are likewise conquerors of Asuras,[100] who "turn back foreign armies" (*paracakrāṇi ca pratinivartayiṣyāmaḥ*),[101] and prophesy the continued reign and prosperity of the ruler who upholds the sutra. It is in this connection that the text, assuring the protection of the state, acquires importance in China and Japan. Then, after such a promising prophecy by the Kings, Sarasvatī appears in the sutra.[102] Yet,

[99] For identification with Sarasvatī, see, for instance, Arjuna's hymn to Durgā (Durgā Stotra), line 23, in app.I, no.1 of the Bhīṣma Parvan in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* (vol.7, fasc.2, pp.710–11), translated in Coburn 1984, pp.272–75, and *Devī Māhātmya* 11:22; for identification with Sāvitrī, see the Durgā Stotra of the *Mahābhārata*, lines 24, 30. For further references, see Ludvik 2001, pp.273–74. On Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī, see pp.122–26 above.

[100] Sanskrit, p.69, lines 4–6 *tena yuṣmākaṃ caturṇāṃ mahārājñāṃ sabalaparivārāṇām anekeṣāṃ ca yakṣaśatasahasrāṇāṃ devāsurasaṃgrāmam abhirūḍhānāṃ jayo bhaviṣyati / asurāṇāṃ ca parājayo bhaviṣyati* / "Therefore there will be victory for you, the four great kings, together with your armies and retainers and numerous hundreds of thousands of Yakṣas, when you enter the conflict of the gods and Asuras. And there will be defeat for the Asuras." (Emmerick 1996, p.26.)

[101] Sanskrit, p.71, line 8 (Emmerick 1996, p.27). Yijing's text, p.427b29–c2, seems to be the corresponding passage.

[102] In the extant Sanskrit (and Dharmakṣema's version), the Sarasvatī chapter immediately follows that of the Four Great Kings. In Baogui's edition, a short chapter entitled 'Chapter of the Silver Lord *Dhāraṇī*' ('Yinzhu tuoluoni *pin*' 銀主陀羅尼品), and in Yijing two chapters called 'Chapter of the Non-clinging *Dhāraṇī*' ('Wuranzhuo tuoluoni *pin*'

not altogether surprisingly, instead of taking her usual manuscript-bearing, *vīṇā*-playing aspect, in Kauṇḍinya's praises she assumes an entirely different form: following the model of the Four Great Kings, both in general function and weapon-wielding appearance, Sarasvatī fittingly manifests as an eight-armed warrior goddess, especially suitable to a defender of the Dharma. It is this form of the eight-armed, weapon-bearing Warrior Goddess in-the-making, whose ferocity and bloody violence are no longer apparent in the Buddhist context, which we then find in images of the eight-armed Buddhist Biancaitian and her Japanese form Benzaiten (fig.25).

Therefore, both Vindhyavāsinī and Sarasvatī have something to gain from identification with one another. We do not find this same association in other sutras, but this is hardly a surprise given the scarce presence of Sarasvatī in early Indian Buddhist literature, where she appears occasionally in lists of names. Only in the *Sutra of Golden Light* is she given an entire chapter to herself. As for images corresponding to the sutra's eight-armed weapon-bearing description, these will be discussed in a separate chapter below (Chapter Twelve). We now return to Kauṇḍinya's speech in Yijing's version of the sutra.

6. Words of Praise To Be Recited

Yijing, pp.437c17–438c23

At this time Kauṇḍinya addresses the great assembly, proclaiming that if they wish to invoke the compassion and protection of the Eloquence Talent Goddess, they will obtain eloquence, intelligence, wisdom, words, genius in debate, and rhetorical embellishment, and that all their wishes will be fulfilled: 於現世中得無礙辯。聰明大智巧妙言詞。博綜奇才論議文飾。隨意成就。無疑滯者。(p.437c19–21). It is thus crystal-clear that in this section Sarasvatī (Biancaitian) is being invoked in her function as goddess of eloquence, and not as a weapon-bearing battle deity. In fact, as we shall see, there is no sign whatsoever here of a Mahiṣāsuramardinī-type figure. This section actually reads like an extension of the first part of the chapter, where the goddess appeared, true

無染著陀羅尼品) and 'Chapter of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel' ('Ruyi baozhu *pin*' 如意寶珠品) appear between the Four Great Kings and the Sarasvatī chapters.

to her Chinese name Biancaitian 辯才天, as an eloquence deity. In the version of the sutra represented by Yijing's translation, then, the Sarasvatī chapter comes full circle, ending where it began, with the Eloquence Talent Goddess.

Following his introductory list of benefits to be gained from praising Biancaitian, Kauṇḍinya explains how those who wish to call on the goddess's compassion and protection should go about invoking her. What distinguishes this section from the extolment uttered by the Brahman in the three- and eight-stanza praises held in common by the Sanskrit, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and Yijing, is that we see little of the figure of the Eloquence Talent Goddess in what follows. Instead, the quality of eloquence, which she represents, is all pervading: while the name Biancai tiannü appears four times, the quality *biancai* 辯才 is repeated no less than thirty-two times in this section of slightly less than one page of the Taishō edition of the Buddhist Canon. In calling on eloquence, one invokes the goddess who presides over it.

Thus, as Kauṇḍinya instructs, one should begin the praise by paying homage to the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha), to Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, all sages and saints, Buddhas of the ten directions of the past and the present, and so on (p.437c23–25). The Brahman then describes the tongue-quality (*lakṣaṇa*) of Buddhas (p.438a2–4), for it is connected with eloquence, which Eloquence Talent Goddess embodies. An invocation follows, in which the wonderful eloquence-talent (*miao biancai* 妙辯才) of a long list of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and numerous other beings, including gods, goddesses, and Yakṣas, is saluted (p.438a7–18) so that they may help the individual to attain this wonderful eloquence-talent (p.438a19). The Eloquence Talent Goddess does not appear in this list, for, true to her name, she is that very eloquence which Buddhas and all other beings possess. Hence, in praising eloquence, the goddess herself is invoked.

Kauṇḍinya, furthermore, explains that one should pay reverence to those who are without deceit, liberated, desireless, free from involvements, pure in heart, and so on,[103] including also Biancaitian, so that she may make one's speech unhindered (令我詞無礙) and so that all one's wishes may be fulfilled (p.438a24–26). A list of other requests follows, including long life, understanding of 'luminous' spells (善解諸明呪), eloquence, and, yet again, fulfillment of all one's wishes (p.438a27–

[103] 敬禮無欺誑 敬禮解脱者 敬禮離欲人 敬禮捨纏蓋 敬禮心清淨 (p.438a20–22).

b17). Afterwards, heaven-dwelling gods and other beings are called on (p.438b18–c1). Further requests for eloquence are then to be addressed to gods, demons, Nāgas, and so on (p.438c3–11). Following the Brahman's speech, Biancaitian praises Kauṇḍinya (p.438c12–17), after which the Buddha himself extols the goddess (p.438c19–23):

> 善哉善哉。善女天。汝能流布是妙經王。擁護所有受持經者。及能利益一切衆生。令得安樂。說如是法。施與辯才不可思議。得福無量。諸發心者。速趣菩提
>
> Well [done], well [done], good goddess. You have the ability to diffuse this wonderful sutra king [*Sutra of Golden Light*] and to protect those who receive and retain [this] sutra. You have the ability to benefit all beings, causing [them] to attain tranquillity and joy. By expounding such a Law, you grant inconceivable eloquence-talent, [causing them] to attain countless blessings, all their heart's desires, and swift awakening.

Biancaitian has the ability to diffuse the sutra because she is the very eloquence of all who teach it, be they Buddhas or Brahmans like Kauṇḍinya. Hence it is the goddess alone who expounds the sutra (說如是法), for were it not for eloquence, no sutra-preaching would be possible.

Here ends Yijing's version of the Biancai tiannü chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

THE SUTRA'S SARASVATĪ IN RETROSPECTIVE

The *Sutra of Golden Light* depicts Sarasvatī under three aspects, corresponding to the three consecutive parts of the Sarasvatī chapter, which were produced in chronologically sequential order. The first of these appears in the earliest extant redaction of the sutra represented by Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation of 417, where the goddess, under the name Great Eloquence Deity (Da Biantian 大辯天), functions as the preserver of the flawless speech and memory of the expounder of the sutra. Accordingly, she fills the exponent with eloquence based on knowledge and memory. This is the only one of the three parts that is directly in line with Sarasvatī's Vedic background, where the river goddess was identified with Speech, and through speech, which expresses knowledge, became goddess of knowledge. Hence, it is from her function as presiding deity of eloquence in this part that her Chinese Buddhist name derives, clearly pointing to her Vedic role.

To this first and earliest part of the Sarasvatī chapter were added two more, not found in Dharmakṣema's version, but included in the extant Sanskrit, in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's translation in Baogui's edition of 597, and in Yijing's translation of 703: Sarasvatī teaches a ritual herbal bath and is then praised by the Brahman Kauṇḍinya as an eight-armed goddess. I have examined the bath here in terms of ancient Indian medicine and as a kind of consecration ritual. The bath reflects the magico-religious healing of the *Atharva Veda* and may well represent a Buddhist esoteric *abhiṣeka*, derived from the royal consecration ceremony where it plays the central part, addressed to the ruling class, to whom the sutra promises protection of the state. Sarasvatī's long ago well established identity and connections with water and healing in the Vedas rendered the goddess of eloquence and knowledge an appropriate teacher for this bathing ritual.

Kauṇḍinya's praises of Sarasvatī consist of three sections held in common by the extant Sanskrit and the Chinese translations of Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and Yijing: a three-stanza praise, in response to which the goddess teaches a spell, followed by an eight-stanza praise. Yijing's translation includes three additional sections: a corresponding spell rite taught by Sarasvatī, a hymn from the *Harivaṃśa* recited by Kauṇḍinya in praise

of our goddess, and the Brahman's instruction of the words to be recited by those who wish to invoke Sarasvatī. Kauṇḍinya's praises, however, reveal also the presence of other goddesses: Pārvatī in the three-stanza praise, Vindhyavāsinī/Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the eight-stanza praise, and Vindhyavāsinī, to whom the *Harivaṃśa* hymn is dedicated. These three goddesses are brought together in the sixth- to seventh-century *Skanda Purāṇa*, wherein Kauśikī, born of the dark sheath shed by Pārvatī, takes up residence in the Vindhya mountains (Vindhyavāsinī) and, as an eight-armed weapon-bearing battle goddess identified also with Mahiṣāsuramardinī, slays demons. Kauṇḍinya's praises correspond to an early stage in the composition, or even a slightly pre-composition stage, of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, wherein Vindhyavāsinī is already connected with Pārvatī's *tapas* and has acquired a warrior character and countenance, which in the sutra she lends to Sarasvatī. These goddesses appear in the *Sutra of Golden Light* under the influence of the developing Warrior Goddess cult and are fittingly made use of by the goddess of eloquence, who functions as a defender of the Dharma. In Chapter Twelve, representations corresponding to the sutra's eight-armed weapon-bearing description will be discussed.

A mystery that remains unresolved is why the extant Sanskrit *Sutra of Golden Light* does not include the *Harivaṃśa* hymn. Was it simply a matter of circumstances that this version of the Sanskrit happened not to have been preserved? Or did someone intentionally edit out material that he recognized to be extraneous to the Sarasvatī chapter? There are, as we have seen, two other sections, found both in Yijing and in the ninth-century Tibetan translation from the Sanskrit (Tib. II), and likewise not preserved in the extant Sanskrit: the spell rite and, at the end of the chapter, the words of praise to be recited by people who wish to invoke Sarasvatī's compassion and protection. These two sections, however, do not contain material that might point to other goddesses, and hence that might warrant editing. In the spell rite, the individual seeks to have a vision of Biancaitian and, for that purpose, draws an image (form unspecified) of her. In his invocation, the devotee calls on the Eloquence Talent Goddess as eloquence itself, requesting the quality she embodies and other benefits. While it is evident why an editor might wish to cut out the *Harivaṃśa* hymn, it is not clear why he should want to remove the two other sections. Furthermore, if it would have been desirable to edit out the *Harivaṃśa* hymn, would it not also have been appropriate to take out the passages held in common by the extant Sanskrit, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and Yijing that point to Pārvatī, Vindhyavāsinī, and Mahiṣāsuramardinī? I would suggest, therefore, that the *Harivaṃśa* hymn was not edited out of the Sanskrit, but, far more likely, that the version of the Sanskrit on which Yijing's Chinese and the ninth-century Tibetan (Tib. II) translations are based, simply did not survive, or is at present not known to have survived.

PART FOUR

IMAGES OF SARASVATĪ

IDENTIFICATION OF IMAGES AND GODDESSES

This final part deals with the identification of images and of goddesses, and what the iconography of the images reveals to us about the way in which the goddess whom they represent was conceptualized. We have seen two Sarasvatī in our textual studies above: a Vedic-epic-Puranic riverine goddess of knowledge and a Buddhist eloquence goddess who, as I have suggested and will discuss here, takes a form similar to the weapon-bearing Mahiṣāsuramardinī. This part, therefore, is divided into two chapters, addressing each of these Sarasvatī: the first (Chapter Eleven) centers on the identification of early images of Sarasvatī and the second (Chapter Twelve) on the identification of images corresponding to the eight-armed battle goddess appearing in the *Sutra of Golden Light*.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EARLY IMAGES OF SARASVATĪ

It is our good fortune that pre-eighth-century Hindu, likely Buddhist, as well as Jain images of Sarasvatī survive. In an environment where, irrespective of religious or philosophical affiliation, knowledge was highly valued, our goddess, as an embodiment of it, had widespread, universal appeal. In terms of textual background, as we have seen, there is a great deal of Vedic, epic, and Puranic literature on the goddess, including iconographic descriptions in the Purāṇas. On the Buddhist end, the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, despite its comparative shortness, provides us with a wealth of information on the Buddhist Sarasvatī, likewise including an iconographic description. As we shall see, however, the sutra's iconography does not apply to the one probably Buddhist image from Sārnāth (fig.9) treated below. As far as I am aware, furthermore, there are no extant Indian examples of the type of eight-armed, weapon-bearing representation described in the sutra that might be identified as 'Sarasvatī,' although it is not impossible that such images were in fact made. I will take up this particular iconographic type in the following chapter.

The principal Jain sources on Sarasvatī, on the other hand, date from a later period, and hence cannot provide us with a background for the earliest Jain images of the goddess. As the composition of these Jain sources extends beyond the time frame of this study (pre-eighth century), they will not be taken up here.[1] The Jain conceptualization of Sarasvatī on the basis of the iconography of the early representations, however, will be briefly discussed.

I will focus here, then, on surviving pre-eighth century Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain Sarasvatī images. In view of the fact that a number of the representations of this time period have been erroneously labelled as Sarasvatī, identification is crucial. Hence I will discuss also these inac-

[1] For a textual discussion of the Jain Sarasvatī, see U. P. Shah 1941. I would like to thank Professor Paul Dundas of the University of Edinburgh and Nagasaki Hōjun 長崎法潤, Professor Emeritus of Ōtani University 大谷大学 in Kyoto, for their assistance in matters of dating Jain sources.

curately identified images, as well as the ones mistakenly dated as pre-eighth century.

1. Bhārhut
Vīṇā-player on a Stupa Pillar (fig.1)

An image which has been called an early prototype of Sarasvatī, and even Sarasvatī herself, appears in the second-century B.C.E. Buddhist site of Bhārhut in eastern Madhya Pradesh.[2] The figure is carved on the southeastern pillar of the earliest surviving stupa railing in India, now housed in the Indian Museum in Kolkata (Calcutta). She stands atop a full-blown lotus growing from a lake,[3] with her left hip thrust out and her right knee bent. As in the case of some of the other Bhārhut images of Yakṣas and Yakṣīs,[4] only the toes of her right foot, now largely missing, appear to have touched the ground. The deity, endowed with a youthful face, carries a seven-stringed harp in her two hands. She wears a sash around her waist, a covering over her head, and ornaments adorn her body. The image is, unfortunately, quite damaged, and there is no descriptive label as is usually found on Bhārhut reliefs. It is, therefore, impossible to identify the figure with certainty.

The belief that this may be Sarasvatī or an early prototype of the goddess stems exclusively from the presence of the stringed instrument, which is indeed a *vīṇā* in its earliest form. In her study of musical instruments in ancient India, Claudie Marcel-Dubois discusses the different types of harps, zithers, and lutes, all of which may be referred to as *vīṇā*.[5] As Ananda Coomaraswamy and Marcel-Dubois explain, the word *vīṇā* was in all probability initially applied to the bow-shaped harp ('harpe

[2] Benimadhab Barua (1934–37, vol.3, p.35), who is followed by Jitendra Nath Banerjea (1956, p.377), advances the early prototype argument. Coomaraswamy (1956, p.63) cautiously suggests the identification of the image with Sarasvatī on the basis of later iconography. V. Yasodadevi (1963, p.690) and K. Bhattacharyya (1983, p.77) go even further, calling her an actual 'representation' of Sarasvatī. Walter Kaufmann (1981, p.50), on the other hand, calls her a Devatā or Apsaras.

[3] Barua 1934–37, vol.2, p.75.

[4] E.g., Barua 1934–37; Harle 1987, fig.12.

[5] Marcel-Dubois 1941, pp.90–91, 113. The different types of harps, zithers, and lutes are described in detail on pp.72–93. See also Nijenhuis 1970, pp.73–88; Sadie 1984, vol.3, pp.728–35; Sadie 2001, vol.26, pp.642–46. The bow-shaped harp is attested from the second century B.C.E., the lute from the early centuries C.E., and the stick-zither from the sixth century C.E.

arquée'), which is the earliest type to appear in artistic representations.[6] The first extant depictions of this bow-shaped harp, furthermore, are to be found at Bhārhut, as in our image. This instrument, however, is not exclusive to our female figure: the Gandharva Pañcaśikha is renowned as a harp-player and appears as Indra's envoy when the king of the gods wishes to meet the Buddha. This scene is illustrated at a number of early Buddhist sites, including Bhārhut.[7] One might also point to two female musicians, one playing a bow-shaped harp and the other a flute, appearing on one of the scenes incised on a first century B.C.E. bronze vase from Gondla, Himachal Pradesh, now in The British Museum.[8] Our image, therefore, cannot be identified as Sarasvatī on the basis of the musical instrument she carries.[9] The earliest extant depictions of what is decidedly Sarasvatī playing upon a *vīṇā* date from the sixth century (figs. 8–9)—no less than eight hundred years after this Bhārhut sculpture. Likewise, the earliest iconographic description of Sarasvatī carrying the *vīṇā* is found in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (66:10b), which according to Hazra may be assigned to 550–650 C.E.[10] The type of *vīṇā* which we see in these sixth-century images, it should be noted, is no longer the bow-shaped harp, but the later zither.[11]

2. GHAṆṬAŚĀLA
FOUR-ARMED SARASVATĪ ON A MARBLE SLAB (FIG.2)

Another image that is claimed to be a second century B.C.E. example of Sarasvatī is from the Buddhist site of Ghaṇṭaśāla in Andhra Pradesh.[12]

[6] Coomaraswamy 1930, p.244; Marcel-Dubois 1941, pp.90–91. See also Sivaramamurti 1942, p.144, pl.13, fig.3.

[7] See Barua 1934–37, vol.3, pl.56. The two sides of the Bhārhut medallion are broken, but a part of the figure of Pañcaśikha holding the bow-shaped harp remains on the left side. Illustrations of this scene are discussed in Coomaraswamy 1928.

[8] Errington, Cribb, and Claringbull 1992, pl.163, pp.162–64. According to Maurizio Taddei (1993, p.347), the vase should be assigned to the second century B.C.E. For numerous other examples of figures playing the bow-shaped harp, see Kaufmann 1981.

[9] For a comprehensive list of deities who carry the *vīṇā*, see Marcel-Dubois 1941, pp.113–14.

[10] See pp.117–18 above.

[11] One exception to the zither and lute in Indian representations of Sarasvatī is the bow-shaped harp in a ninth-century bronze image of the goddess from Nālandā (Marcel-Dubois 1941, pl.XLVI:1).

[12] K. Bhattacharyya 1983, pp.78,131–32; Sahai 1975, pp.152–53; Yasodadevi 1963, p.689. Support for this dating is even claimed on the basis of stylistic features: K. Bhatta-

Although scholars who make this claim refer to Alexander Rea's report of the excavation at the stupa at the beginning of 1892,[13] Rea does not in fact suggest that the Sarasvatī image belongs to the second century B.C.E. He explains that the stupa probably dates to a few years following the later works of Amarāvatī, which would place it in about the second or third century C.E. A few of the many marble slabs that would have adorned the building, including piers, capitals, an umbrella, a carved railing, stupa slabs, and other slabs now carved with modern sculptures, have been preserved in the village of Ghaṇṭaśāla and adjoining villages. Our Sarasvatī appears on one of these remaining slabs which have been defaced and resculptured with Hindu deities, and which are now worshipped in a Śiva temple. It is not, therefore, anything near a second century B.C.E. Sarasvatī image, nor is it a Buddhist Sarasvatī, but rather a comparatively modern, crudely-carved four-armed Hindu Sarasvatī. The deity's hair is rolled and layered on her head like a coiled snake, and her relatively too large and protruding ears are adorned with earrings. She stands naked and flat-footed, holding a lotus in her top right hand, a manuscript in her top left,[14] and petting her mount the *haṃsa* with her bottom right hand, while her bottom left hand simply hangs down. Her two top arms are so disproportionately large and masculine-looking that they appear not to belong to her body. Her bottom arms, emerging from her excessively broad shoulders, are also a little larger than they should be. The bottom left arm is far too angular at the wrist, with an out-of-proportion big hand placed on the head of the *haṃsa*. The bottom hands, furthermore, are carved in abbreviated form so that instead of five fingers, we see something resembling the head of a fish or a snake. The iconography of this Sarasvatī image is an indication in itself, as we shall see, of a date clearly much later than the second century B.C.E. Although the manuscript shows up in a ca. third century C.E. image (fig.3), the *haṃsa* is first mentioned as Brahmāṇī's mount in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (161:25a) of ca. 550–650 C.E. and does not appear amongst the surviving images of what is decidedly Sarasvatī until about the seventh century (fig.11).

charyya (p.78) points to the 'strict frontality' of the image, which is supposed to indicate that it is contemporary with the Bhārhut image, while Yasodadevi, who claims it belongs to the third century B.C.E., sees resemblances with Mohenjo-Daro art.

[13] Rea 1894, pp.32–34, 38; pl.XXXI.

[14] In one instance K. Bhattacharyya claims this is a manuscript (1983, p.78), and in another, that it is a noose (1983, p.131). It is not clear to me why he and Sahai (1975, p.145) have interpreted this object to be a noose.

3. Gandhāra
Vīṇā-player on a Lion

A sculpture of a goddess seated on a lion and playing a lute appears amidst the Gandhāra art of the Lahore Museum. This female figure, whose head is missing, as are parts of the leaping lion, was identified by Albert Grünwedel as belonging to the Sarasvatī type on the basis of later images of the goddess.[15] The lute the deity plays is another kind of *vīṇā*, which first appears in Gandhāra art.[16] Alfred Foucher, on the other hand, suggested that, although the image represents a musician deity of some repute, at this time she would not yet have succeeded in distinguishing herself from the anonymous crowd of such figures.[17] There are plenty of other Gandhāra examples of males and females playing the same type of lute, and they are usually identified simply as musicians.[18] Clearly, the same identification could just as well be applied to this figure on the lion, as Harald Ingholt has done, labelling her as a 'gandharvī.'[19] Sarasvatī, it should be noted, does not have the lion as her mount.

Foucher's suggestion that the *vīṇā*-playing Sarasvatī arises from amidst the host of Gandharvī figures is certainly inaccurate. As we have seen, there are numerous factors which contributed to the development of Sarasvatī into a goddess of music: the sound of the river's flowing waters, her identification with Speech, the recitation of the Vedas, Vāc's choice to remain with the *vīṇā*-playing gods in the myth of the Barter for Soma, and the expansion of her territory to all fields of knowledge, to name but the most relevant points.

[15] Grünwedel 1920, pp.100–01. Grünwedel has only a line drawing of the image. For a photographic illustration, see, for instance, Foucher 1918, p.71, fig.340 and Ingholt 1957, pl.363.

[16] For the *vīṇā* as a lute, see Marcel-Dubois 1941, pp.87–91. The types of lute associated with Sarasvatī are the ancient *kacchapī*, which had a pear-shaped body (Nijenhuis 1970, p.85), and the ca. three-hundred-year-old large, long-necked plucked lute of South India called the *Sarasvatī vīṇā* (Sadie 2001, vol.26, pp.644–46). In Japan, the two-armed Sarasvatī (Benzaiten) also plays the lute (*biwa* 琵琶): see Nedachi 1992, figs.22, 24–26, 125, 127, 138, 159–64.

[17] Foucher 1918, p.67.

[18] See, for instance, the stone image of the female musician from Swāt in the Peshawar Museum, dated to the early centuries C.E. (Marshall 1960, fig.65), and the male musician from Yusufzai (L. Dames, Berlin) of the same period (Smith 1930, pl.39d).

[19] Ingholt 1957, p.151, pl.363.

4. Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā
Sarasvatī with a Manuscript (fig.3)

The earliest surviving artistic representation which decidedly depicts Sarasvatī was found by A. Führer on January 18, 1889 at the Jain site of Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā near Mathurā. There used to be two magnificent temples on the site, which belonged to the Śvetāmbaras.[20] The image, now kept at the State Museum in Lucknow, is made of mottled red sandstone and measures 57 cm in height. It is quite damaged, with the head, shoulders, right hand, and left breast missing altogether. Most fortunately, however, it bears an inscription on the two-tiered pedestal identifying the figure as Sarasvatī and specifying the date of its installation. The inscription consists of seven lines written in Brāhmī script:

1. *(sid)dhaṃ sava 50 4 hemaṃtamāse catu(r)tth(e) 4 divas(e) 10 a-*
2. *sya purvvāyāṃ koḷeyāto gaṇāto sṭhāniyāto kulāto*
3. *vairāto śākhāto śrīgṛh(ā)to sambhogāto vācakasyāryya*
4. *(gha)sta*(or *u) hastisya śiṣyo gaṇisya aryya māghahastisya śraddhacaro vācakasya a-*
5. *ryya devasya nirvvarttana govasya sīhaputrasya lohikakarakasya dānaṃ*
6. *sarvvasatv(ā)n(ā)ṃ hitasukhā ekasarasvatī pratīṣṭhāvitā stavatale (na)dānavato*
7. *dha(r)m(e?)*

Success! In the year 54,[21] in the fourth month of winter, 4, on the 10th day,[22] on this occasion as specified, a Sarasvatī, the gift of the smith[23] Gova,

[20] Bühler 1889, p.233; Burgess 1892–94, vol.1, p.378.

[21] Bühler had some difficulties deciphering the first numeral of the year: in his article in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* in 1889 (p.239) he hesitantly proposed the year 84, which he then, in *Epigraphia Indica* in 1892 (Burgess 1892–94, vol.1, p.391), revised—still hesitantly—to 54 on the basis of another inscription that includes both words and figures (p.391, note 66). According to Smith (1901, p.56, note 1; p.57), the plate in *Epigraphia Indica* (no.21) clearly reads 44. Lüders (1904, p.105, nos.16–17), however, argued for the year 54: while the first figure of the date does not resemble the numeral sign for 40, he could not, on the other hand, recognize any difference between that figure and the signs for 50 occurring in Mathurā inscriptions. Furthermore, Lüders added, the appearance of some of the same names in what he read as slightly different forms, as well as of some of the same facts (the venerable Deva as the teacher of a member of the caste of smiths) in an inscription for another Jain image of Mathurā from two years earlier, confirm the reading for the year of our inscription as 54. Likewise, van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1949, p.286–87), whose translation this is, reads the numerals for the year as 54.

[22] While for Bühler (in Burgess 1892–94, vol.1, p.391) and van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (as above) the numeral for the day is 10, according to Smith (1901, p.56, note 2), followed by Lüders (1904, p.105, nos.16–17, note 49), the plate in *Epigraphia Indica* reads 11 or 12.

[23] Although Jains cannot take up the profession of smiths, as it involves the destruc-

son of Sīha, (was) erected at the request of the preacher the venerable Deva, the *śraddhacaro* [companion] of the *gaṇin* [head of a school] the venerable Māghahasti, the pupil of the preacher the venerable (Gha)sta(or u?)hasti, of the Koḷeya *gaṇa*, the Sṭhāniya *kula*, the Vairā *śākhā*, the Śrīgṛha *sambhoga*,[24] for the welfare of all beings.[25]

Ghasta(or u)hasti and his disciple Māghahasti appear as Māghuhasti and Ghastuhasti in another inscription with the reading of the year as 52.[26] The year 54 refers to Kaniṣka's chronological system. There continues to be wide disagreement amongst scholars, however, on the date when the era began.[27] If we follow those who support the year 78 C.E., it places our image in 132 C.E. Many, on the other hand, believe the era began about half a century later, in 110–15 or in 128, for instance. That would put our sculpture in the latter part of the second century. Others still, insist on the third century, notably the leading numismatist Robert Göbl, who argues for 225–32.[28] If we follow Göbl, our image would then have been produced in 286. Furthermore, Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw's masterly study on the Scythian period shows that between the years 100 and 157 of the Kaniṣka era (and possibly even after that), people continued to count steadily on, but omitted the figure 100 when inscribing a date.[29] Therefore, unless an inscription from this period gives the name of the reigning monarch, all dates between 1 and 57 can pertain either to the first half of the first century of Kaniṣka's era or to the first half of the second century—as in our image. This dilemma can then

tion of animal life, Bühler (1889, p.239, note 9) suggests that Gova may either have been a smith or have belonged to the caste of smiths, but would have left the profession on converting to Jainism.

[24] It would seem that the *kula* represented the spiritual lineage of the master, that the *śākhā* was a branch issued from this line, and the *sambhoga* a regional subdivision (Bühler 1890, pp.315–16). The division into *gaṇa* and *kula* is peculiar to the Jains (Bühler 1888, p.142).

[25] Reading of the inscription and translation by van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1949, p.287). Her reading resolves the enigmatic last line, which had remained unclear to Bühler (1889, p.239 and in Burgess 1892–94, vol.1, pp.391–92), Smith (1901, p.56), and Lüders (1904, p.104). Square-bracketed portions and italics in the translation are mine.

[26] When Lüders noted this point in 1904 (p.104, nos.16–17), his reading of 'Ghasta(or u)hasti' in our inscription, in accordance with Bühler's before him (1889, p.239 and in Burgess 1892–94, vol.1, pp.391–92), was as 'Hastahasti.' Guérinot (1908, pp.40–41) provides a convenient chart of the Koḷeya (Koṭika) *gaṇa*, its subdivisions, and its lineage of teachers on the basis of surviving inscriptions.

[27] For a recent summary of the numerous dates proposed, see Zwalf 1996, vol.1, app.1, pp.357–58, which includes extensive bibliographic references.

[28] Göbl 1993, p.77.

[29] van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949, pp.232–301.

be resolved by comparison with sculptures with fixed dates and by analysis of the character forms in the inscription. If we consider the arrangement of our Sarasvatī sculpture, it is characteristic of post-Kuṣāṇa art, as van Lohuizen-de Leeuw points out. The goddess appears on an inscribed two-tiered rectangular pedestal, with an adorant on each side of her, standing on the first tier. This same arrangement (with top tier not always inscribed) is found in post-Kuṣāṇa Jina images of Mathurā.[30] Furthermore, van Lohuizen-de Leeuw's meticulous analysis of the style and character forms of the inscription shows a number of points in common with Gupta inscriptions. Thus, she argues, the date must be one hundred years later: year 154. As van Lohuizen-de Leeuw accepts the year 78 as the beginning of Kaniṣka's era, the year 154 of this era would then correspond to 232 C.E.[31] Given the wide range and complexity of suggestions for the starting date of the Kaniṣka era, I myself will cautiously settle for a date of ca. third century for our Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā Sarasvatī image.

Atop the two-tiered, rectangular pedestal bearing this long inscription, a now headless Sarasvatī sits squatting. This is indeed, as Umakant P. Shah points out,[32] the posture in which Mahāvīra attained the highest knowledge, and for that reason it is also an appropriate posture for the goddess of knowledge. The lower half of Sarasvatī's body is draped in a sari, the end of which is drawn over her left arm and would have extended over her no longer existent left shoulder. As Sadashiv Gorakshakar notes,[33] her squatting posture with her knees spread wide apart emphasizes the crescent folds of her sari. She wears a bracelet on each wrist, and holds a palm-leaf manuscript wrapped in cloth in her left hand. There have been various suggestions as to what her missing right hand might have held: a lotus,[34] a *mudrā*,[35] a pen,[36] or a rosary.[37] In 1941 U. P. Shah began by quoting Jain iconographic descriptions, mostly of a much later date than our Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā sculpture, such as Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri's (ca.743–

[30] Ibid., pp.286, 241 (textfig.22), 246 (textfig.23).

[31] Ibid., pp.287–88.

[32] U. P. Shah 1987, p.324.

[33] In Pal 1994, pl.55.

[34] Gorakshakar in Pal 1994, pl.55; U. P. Shah 1941, p.199.

[35] According to Bhattasali 1929, p.187, the *vyākhyāna* (teaching); according to Bajpai 1946, p.1, and Jain 1964, p.100, the *abhaya* (no fear); or according to Jain 1964, p.100 and 1971, p.31, the *varada* (boon-giving) hand gesture.

[36] Bhattasali 1929, p.187.

[37] Bajpai 1946, p.1; Debala Mitra in A. Ghosh 1974–75, vol.1, p.67; van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949, p.286; U. P. Shah 1987, p.324; D. M. Srinivasan 1989, p.356.

838) *Caturvaṃśathā*,[38] and then, presumably on that basis, suggested that Sarasvatī probably held a lotus in her right hand.[39] By 1946, however, K. D. Bajpai had taken a closer look at the image and noticed a part of the rosary—four beads to be exact—preserved near the wrist.[40] As he suggested, Sarasvatī's right hand was probably also raised in a *mudrā*, as one sees in later images.[41] The fact that the arm is raised is an indication in itself that it could not have been held in the downward-pointing *varada mudrā*. From the point of view of the position of the arm and wrist, and in accordance with the inscription which states that the image was made "for the welfare of all beings," the *abhaya mudrā*, which Bajpai suggests, and the *vyākhyāna* are both possibilities. However, since the image was made at the request of a preacher and a manuscript was placed in Sarasvatī's left hand—hence emphasizing her function as goddess of knowledge—the teaching gesture would seem to be the more fitting.

Moreover, Sarasvatī is flanked by two diminutive male figures: the one on her right wears a dhoti and carries a water pot, while the one on her left is draped in monk's robes and holds his palms together in veneration. As Gorakshakar suggests, the former probably represents the smith Gova, and the latter the preacher Aryadeva (translated by van Lohuizen-de Leeuw above as "the preacher the venerable Deva"), who inspired him to donate the image.[42]

For Jyoti Prasad Jain, this Sarasvatī sculpture is the symbol of a period of Jain literary activity (zenith ca. 50 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) that he calls 'the Sarasvatī movement.'[43] What he refers to, therefore, is not a 'movement' centering on Sarasvatī, but rather on learning as such, which she

[38] Stanza 76: *vāgdevī varadābhūtapustikāpadmalakṣitau / āpo 'vyād bibhratī hastau pustikāpadmalakṣitau //* (as quoted in U. P. Shah 1941, p.198, note 19). Although Shah (1941, p.198, note 21) quotes a few stanzas at the end of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, a text that dates, in parts, from a very early period (third or second century B.C.E., gradually expanded), Sarasvatī's name does not appear here: a *śrutadevatā* has a full-blown lotus in her hand. According to Paul Dundas (personal communication), however, this *śrutadevatā* mentioned in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* is surely not Sarasvatī, "but rather a kind of all purpose category." Nagasaki Hōjun, on the other hand, believes it is Sarasvatī (personal communication). For Śrutadevī as Sarasvatī in later times, see p.245 below.

[39] U. P. Shah 1941, pp.198–99.

[40] Bajpai 1946, p.1. While van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1949, p.286) and U. P. Shah (1987, p.324) are aware of the beads, other scholars do not seem to have taken notice of them and have continued to speculate about the missing right hand (see, for instance, Gorakshakar in Pal 1994, pl.55).

[41] See K. Bhattacharyya 1983, pl.19, for instance.

[42] In Pal 1994, pl.55.

[43] Jain 1964, pp.100–19; 1971, pp.30–33.

as pan-Indian goddess of knowledge represents. Nevertheless, to label a period of literary activity as 'the Sarasvatī movement' seems to me misleading because it suggests large-scale, organized worship of the goddess, for which there is no evidence. Although, as Jain advances, other Jain images of Sarasvatī may well have been made prior to this one,[44] if there had been so many, would it not be reasonable to presume that more than one would have survived?

5. Samudragupta and Samācāradeva Coins Female Figure on the Reverse

5.1 *Samudragupta Coin* (figs.4–5)

The Allahabad pillar inscription glorifies Samudragupta's (r. ca. 350–75) skill in music.[45] On his lyrist type coins,[46] the king is shown playing a bow-shaped harp on the obverse (fig.4), while a female figure appears on the reverse (fig.5). She is seated on a wicker stool, wearing a loose robe and a close-fitting cap, and is adorned with jewelry. In her right hand she holds a fillet, and in her left a horn of plenty. Because Samudragupta appears on the front of the coin playing the *vīṇā*, this figure on the back, according to Radha Kumud Mookerji,[47] can be identified as Sarasvatī, the goddess of music closely associated with this instrument. Although this connection may appear plausible,[48] if we compare this female figure with the ones found on the reverse side of other Samudragupta or other Gupta rulers' coins, Mookerji's identification of her as Sarasvatī becomes untenable.

[44] Jain 1971, p.32.

[45] The entire inscription together with the translation is found in Fleet 1888, no.1, pl.1, pp.6–17. The glorification of Samudragupta's skill in music appears on line 27.

[46] Allan lists nine coins (1914, pp.18–20), providing plates for all (pl.V, 1–8) but the one in the Indian Museum in Kolkata. There are others, such as the two in the National Museum in New Delhi published in Chhabra 1986, pl.I, figs.10–11 and Khandalavala 1991, pl.3, and the one from the Lingen Collection in the Netherlands published in Raven 1994a, pl.6.

[47] Mookerji 1969, pp.35, 137.

[48] Leaving aside questions which come to mind, such as why, if Sarasvatī is intended to be depicted here specifically as goddess of music, she is not portrayed playing her characteristic instrument, and why Mookerji does not mention the Kumāragupta lyrist type coins with a female figure on the reverse (by Mookerji's reasoning, this female figure should likewise be Sarasvatī).

There are numerous extant examples of female figures with a fillet, usually, as in the case of our coin, in the right hand.[49] There are also a number of examples of a seated female figure holding a fillet in her right hand and a horn of plenty in her left—just as in our coin—such as on the reverse side of the sceptre and battle-axe types of Samudragupta coins and on the sceptre type of Candragupta II (r. ca. 375–413) coins.[50] This female figure is generally accepted to be Śrī (Lakṣmī), the embodiment of prosperity, an essential royal virtue, who, like an invisible other wife, attends to the king. Skandagupta (r. ca. 455–67), who is described in the Junagadh inscription as embraced by Śrī and carefully selected by Lakṣmī from among all other kings, even issued coins on the front of which he appears together with Lakṣmī, his divine consort, beneath the imperial banner.[51] The goddess of fortune appears on the back of most coin series of the Gupta rule, a device originally borrowed from late Kuṣāṇa coin imagery, as Ellen Raven explains.[52]

The most plausible identification of the female figure on the reverse of the Samudragupta lyrist type coin is then likewise Lakṣmī, as John Allan, Raven, and others have posited,[53] and not Sarasvatī. The diadem fillet which she carries represents sovereignty, while the horn of plenty symbolizes prosperity. Both implements are therefore related to the ruler.[54]

[49] See, for instance, Allan 1914 and Raven 1994a.

[50] For the Samudragupta sceptre type coin, see Raven 1994a, pl.1, and for the Candragupta II sceptre type coin, Raven 1994a, pl.4.

[51] Raven 1994a, pp.42–43, pl.2. For the Junagadh rock inscription, see Fleet 1888, pp.56–65 (passages referred to appear in lines 2 and 5 on p.59).

[52] Raven 1994a, p.44. The image of Lakṣmī carrying a fillet and a horn of plenty is modelled on Ardoxsho, a goddess of Avestan or local eastern Iranian origin who governs over good fortune in political, dynastic, and national matters, and who is depicted on Kuṣāṇa coins. See Rosenfield 1967, pp.74–75.

[53] Allan 1914, pp.lxxv, 18; Raven 1994a, p.45, explanation to pl.6; Altekar 1957, p.76; Chhabra 1986, pp.5–6, pl.I, figs.10–11; Khandalavala 1991, p.110, explanation to fig.3 by R. Vanaja; and so on.

[54] One could take the symbolism of this coin a step further (see Raven 1994a, p.49), connecting the obverse and the reverse through the musical instrument played by Samudragupta. The *vīṇā* in the Aśvamedha sacrifice (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13:1:5:1) represents *śrī*. She leaves the king during the performance of this sacrifice, and is again conferred upon him when the *vīṇā* is played for him. Although it is true that Samudragupta is the one playing the *vīṇā* on the coin, while Brahmans rather than the king himself play the *vīṇā* during the Aśvamedha, the association of the *vīṇā* with *śrī* in the royal sacrifice might conceivably have endowed it with symbolism related to the figure of Śrī on the reverse side of the coin. At the same time, however, we do not know that this symbolism was read into the *vīṇā* played by Samudragupta on this coin at the time of its production. The bow-shaped harp represented here might simply be connected with Samudragupta's skill in music.

5.2 *Samācāradeva Coin* (figs.6–7)

Another coin that is believed to have Sarasvatī on the back is the *rājalīlā* type coin of the king Samācāradeva (ca. 550–75) of the independent kingdom of Vaṅga, which arose in Bengal (eastern and southern) at the fall of the Gupta empire.[55] The king is represented on the front side seated on a couch in *rājalīlā* (royal ease) posture with a female attendant on each side (fig.6). The syllables *samā*, *cā*, and possibly *ra* appear to be written out in the available spaces.[56] On the reverse (fig.7) stands a female figure on a lotus in *tribhaṅga* ('three bends') posture. With her right hand she draws up a lotus bud with a long stalk, as if to smell it, while her left elbow rests on a lotus with a bent stalk. Amidst other lotuses, a *haṃsa* appears at her feet. It is the presence of the *haṃsa*, Sarasvatī's traditional mount, which suggests the identification of the female figure as Sarasvatī,[57] whose earliest extant representation with geese (rather than with her single *haṃsa* mount) is from around the seventh century (fig.11). But if, in imitation of the Guptas, Samācāradeva had Lakṣmī represented on the reverse side of his archer type of coin,[58] would it not be reasonable to consider that it is likewise Lakṣmī that we see on the back of this *rājalīlā* type coin? As Raven explains, while the diadem fillet and the horn of plenty are the emblems of the goddess in the earliest Gupta coin series, her iconography was changed to match Lakṣmī's well-known association with lotuses.[59] Already in the Candragupta II lion-slayer type of coin, we see her carrying a fillet and a lotus, and in his *cakravikrama* type of coin, an unidentified female deity with a lotus stands on another lotus.[60] On the Kumāragupta I (ca. 415–50) tiger-slayer and horseman type coins, Lakṣmī appears with a lotus, feeding fruit to a peacock, a prized pet in the royal household and the mount of Kārttikeya/Kumāra, war-leader of the gods.[61] Likewise the female figure on the

[55] On Samācāradeva see Majumdar 1943, pp.51–54.

[56] Altekar 1954, p.313; 1957, p.328.

[57] Bhattasali 1923, p.56; Altekar 1957, p.328. Vincent Smith (1972 repr., p.122) mistook the *haṃsa* for a peacock, and identified the female figure simply as a goddess. Allan (1914, p.150), on the other hand, thought it was Lakṣmī.

[58] Allan 1914, p.149, pl.XXIV.3; Altekar 1957, p.327, pl.XIXA.6. Bhattasali (1923, p.55) and Smith (1972 repr., p.121) do not identify the goddess. This is the only other Samācāradeva coin that is known.

[59] Raven 1994a, p.44; 1994b, vol.1, p.32.

[60] The lion-slayer type of coin is published in Raven 1994a, p.52, pl.14, and the *cakravikrama* type on p.44, pl.5.

[61] The tiger-slayer type of coin is published in Raven 1994a, p.51, pl.13, and the horseman type on p.54, pl.15.

reverse of the Samācāradeva coin is surrounded by lotuses, appropriate to Lakṣmī, and a bird particularly fond of lotuses[62] appears below. Although the *haṃsa* was not as closely associated with royalty as the peacock, it held a prominent place amongst the animals kept at the court of Indian kings.[63] Poets honored it with the name *rājahaṃsa* 'royal goose' and considered it the king or master of feathered birds.[64] Yet the connection with the *haṃsa* is certainly not exclusive to Sarasvatī, as we have already seen in the Purāṇas,[65] and to identify the figure on the reverse of Samācāradeva's *rājalīlā* coin as Sarasvatī is highly questionable. I would suggest, rather, that the identification of her as Lakṣmī is far more probable.

6. Uttar Pradesh
Vīṇā-playing Sarasvatī Sculptures

In this section I will introduce four images: a two-armed representation of Sarasvatī now in The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; a two-armed example from Sārnāth; a four-armed image within a medallion in the State Museum, Lucknow; and a four-armed sculpture from Mathurā kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata.

6.1 *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Sculpture* (fig.8)

A slightly polished, buff sandstone Sarasvatī playing a stick-zither dates from about the sixth century and comes from a temple in Uttar Pradesh.[66] This image, measuring 84.2 cm in height, formerly belonged to the Pan-Asian Collection and was acquired by The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2004. The lower half of Sarasvatī's body is draped with a sari, and she wears a scarf around her upper arms. Her hair is rolled up into a wide bun and adorned with an elaborate jewelled fillet. Particularly large earrings weigh down her ears, and she wears a necklace, armlets, bracelets, a waist band, and anklets. The figure is seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus, playing the stick-zither, also referred to as a *vīṇā*, attested from the sixth century onward.[67] However, the middle part of Sarasvatī's instrument is missing. Accompanying the deity are two animal-headed musicians representing Gandharvas. The ape-headed one on her lower right plays a drum, while the horse-headed one on her lower left plays a flute. Above the Gandharvas, are two Apsarases: the one on Sarasvatī's right dances, and the one on her left plays the cymbals. Amidst her lively entourage, Sarasvatī appears as goddess of music, playing her *vīṇā*.

6.2 *Sārnāth Sculpture* (fig.9)

The Sārnāth Museum of Archaeology has a small figure (ht. 35.5 cm) of Sarasvatī on a slab of reddish Chunar sandstone discovered in 1904–05 and stylistically dated to the sixth century. Although much more roughly and simply made, it has many points in common with the exquisite image from The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (fig.8), also of about the sixth century and likewise from Uttar Pradesh. This Sarasvatī is seated in *lalitāsana* as well, playing a stick-zither. She wears the same hairstyle, clothing, and ornaments as the previous one, but she is not surrounded by celestial musicians and dancers. Above the deity's head is foliage from a tree, and to her lower right is an upside down jar. The water pot is indeed an appropriate symbol for a river goddess. As we have seen, the *Matsya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* prescribe the *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book in Sarasvatī's four hands.[68] This image, however, like the previous one, is only two-armed, and there is no sign of either the rosary or the book.

As it was found at the Buddhist site of Sārnāth, furthermore, it is probably, but not necessarily, a Buddhist Sarasvatī. Although Daya Ram Sahni in his catalogue of the museum[69] lists this representation under "Images of goddesses and other female images" amidst Buddhist goddesses, it could just as well have been included in his section on "Brahmanical sculptures." It is not inconceivable that it was produced as a Hindu image, which found its way into a Buddhist environment. The Museum

[62] For a discussion of the close association of the *haṃsa* with the lotus, see Vogel 1962, pp.5–8.
[63] Ibid., p.11.
[64] Ibid., pp.10, 12, 22.
[65] See p.133 above.
[66] Pal 1977, pl.17; Masselos, Menzies, and Pal 1997, pp.100–01, pl.45. See also the cover photo of the present study.

[67] It has been suggested that the stick-zither may have been an indigenous folk instrument long before its representation in art. See Sadie 1984, vol.3, pp.728–29.
[68] See pp.131–32 above.
[69] Sahni 1914.

of Fine Arts, Houston sculpture, at any rate, of which it appears as a pale shadow, is assumed to be a Hindu representation, as it shows no indication of being a Buddhist one.

6.3 *State Museum, Lucknow Sculpture* (fig.10)

The State Museum in Lucknow has a buff sandstone image of *vīṇā*-playing Sarasvatī with attendants, likewise from Uttar Pradesh, dated ca. 600–99, but quite possibly earlier.[70] In contrast with The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston sculpture (fig.8), the deity's attendants are not musicians, but diminutive extensions of her, endowed with her implements.

The group appears within a medallion measuring 64 x 68 cm. Lotuses grow out from the bottom center, providing seats for Sarasvatī and her two female attendants, and also partly encircling, with their long stems, the inside of the medallion. The surrounding lotuses, some in bloom and others with closed buds, extend counter-clockwise to fill the upper part of the medallion, all gravitating toward the beautiful face of Sarasvatī. The goddess is depicted here with four arms: she plays the stick-zither with her two principal hands; holds out her secondary left arm, grasping the ends of her scarf and sari; and carries what appears to be a down-turned lotus in her partly missing secondary right hand. Her stretched-out left hand catching the ends of her scarf and sari was likely intended to fill the composition. In addition to the damage on the two side arms, her right leg is largely lost, as is the bottom of her left foot. Moreover, the two ends of her *vīṇā* have also been destroyed. As in The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston sculpture (fig.8), the lower half of Sarasvatī's body is draped with a sari, and she wears a scarf around her upper arms. Her hair is likewise rolled up into a wide bun with jewelled fillet, but in this case pushed further back, allowing us to see the front of her hair parted in the middle. The same type of large earrings, furthermore, adorn her ears. The deity wears a necklace, garland, waist band, and it would seem also armlets and bracelets. However, the anklets she probably had on are no longer visible. Two smaller female figures with the same hairstyle and ornaments sit, one on each side, below Sarasvatī: the one on her right holds a whisk in her right hand and a rosary in her left, while the

[70] American Institute of Indian Studies, Photo Archive (http://dsal.uchicago.edu/images/aiis/aiis_search.html).

one on her left carries a manuscript. Moreover, the smaller female on Sarasvatī's right looks up at the goddess, who in turn looks back down at her, whereas the one to the deity's left fixes her gaze, perhaps protectively, on the manuscript she holds. These two figures appear to be miniature forms of the goddess, extensions of her, carrying her other characteristic implements: the rosary and the manuscript, with the whisk as an extra.

Although Sarasvatī's musical function is highlighted in this image, the presence of the manuscript carried by her lower left attendant indicates that she also plays the role of goddess of knowledge here.

6.4 *Indian Museum, Kolkata Sculpture* (fig.11)

The Indian Museum in Kolkata has a small (ht. ca. 12.70 cm), ca. seventh-century beige sandstone sculpture of a four-armed Sarasvatī from Mathurā. Seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus, the goddess plays the stick-zither with her two main hands and holds a lotus in each one of her two side hands. She wears a scarf over her upper arms, and her lower body is draped in a now almost invisible sari. Unfortunately, our deity's face is also faded. Her hair is rolled up into a wide bun and adorned with a jewelled fillet, heavy earrings weigh down her ears, and she wears a necklace, armlets, bracelets, and a waist band. The goddess's anklets can no longer be seen, and her *vīṇā*, furthermore, is broken on both ends. There are two geese, one on each side, below her lotus seat. The one on her lower right reaches up to her knee, perhaps pulling at her sari, while the one on her lower left has lost its head.

This Mathurā image depicts Sarasvatī as a goddess of music. The presence of two *haṃsa* suggests it is not her single *haṃsa* mount, but it does indicate that by the seventh century she was associated with *haṃsa* in sculptural representation.

7. Ākoṭā and Vasantgarh
Sarasvatī Bronzes with Lotus and Manuscript

Amongst the large number of Jain metal images dating from the seventh to the tenth century dug out before June 1951 from the site of Ākoṭā, the ancient town of Aṅkoṭṭaka not far from Vadodara (formerly Baroda) in Gujarat discovered in 1949, were three images which U. P. Shah identi-

fied as Sarasvatī.[71] These bronze sculptures are now kept at the Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara.

7.1 *Bronze from ca. 600–20* (fig.12)

The earliest bronze statue is from ca. 600–20, and was offered by a nun called Isiyā. We know this from the entirely preserved inscription starting from the left side of what remains of the pedestal and running along the back of it. The inscription reads:

> *oṃ devadharmoyaṃ nivuya kulikasya /*
> *isiyā* (?) *gaṇiṇyo* (?) (*ṇī*?) /
>
> Om. This is the pious gift of the *gaṇiṇi* (nun) Isiyā.[72]

The image itself, measuring 26.67 cm in height, has been well preserved. The goddess stands on the flat pedestal with her hip thrust slightly to her right. As in the case of other Ākoṭā sculptures of Sarasvatī, she has a large head and a slender body with full breasts. She wears a lower garment with a triangle pattern formed by slanting lines and enclosed in broad horizontal lines. Her scarf, worn over her shoulders and falling onto the pedestal, has a bead design with the two ends showing a geometrical motif. Her hair is worn in a large bun on top of her head and adorned with a crown. A plain, slightly oblong halo encircled with beads appears behind the goddess's head. She wears earrings, a necklace with a pendant, bracelets, and a waist band. Her left, disproportionately large hand hangs down holding a manuscript, while in her right hand she carries a lotus with a long stalk extending down to the pedestal.

In U. P. Shah's explanation of the Sarasvatī images found in Ākoṭā,[73] he curiously omits the mention of the object held in her left hand (i.e., the manuscript). In a 1941 article, however, he identifies the same object, which in this case is held in the hand of a Sarasvatī from Vasantgarh dated ca. 650–75 and stylistically akin to the Ākoṭā sculptures, as a book (i.e., a manuscript).[74] Now if the Vasantgarh image holds a manuscript, then the Ākoṭā bronzes undoubtedly do also. For the goddess of knowledge, it is obviously a fitting emblem, which we have already seen in the

[71] On the Ākoṭā bronzes, see U. P. Shah's 1959 study.
[72] Translation by U. P. Shah (1959, p.34, pls.75a–b).
[73] U. P. Shah 1959, pp.33–34, 43, 46.
[74] U. P. Shah 1941, p.199 referring to his fig.2.

Sarasvatī image from Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā (fig.3), also a Jain site. Shah, however, must have doubted that the object held by the Ākoṭā sculptures was a manuscript, since, despite his extensive description of each image (1959), he did not even mention its presence. Why this would be an issue for doubt, especially since he compares the Ākoṭā statues of Sarasvatī with the one from Vasantgarh, where he seems not to have been in doubt regarding her manuscript, is uncertain. And if he did not believe it was a manuscript, it is unclear on what basis he identified any of the Ākoṭā images as Sarasvatī.

Out of three Ākoṭā bronzes depicting the goddess, all of which carry the same emblems, only this one has an inscription indicating that it is a gift from the nun Isiyā. This inscription, however, does not provide any information on the identity of the goddess. As the lotus is not exclusive to Sarasvatī, the manuscript is her distinguishing feature. In other words, if the manuscript in the Ākoṭā bronzes is not identified, then there is no basis on which to recognize that these images represent Sarasvatī. Comparison of the Vasantgarh Sarasvatī with the Ākoṭā sculptures, on the other hand, leaves no doubt that they all hold the same object in the left hand, and that it is indeed a manuscript. If we look at the surviving Jain images of Sarasvatī, furthermore, both the lotus and the manuscript appear very commonly.[75]

7.2 *Late Seventh-Century Bronze* (fig.13)

In this late seventh-century Ākoṭā image of Sarasvatī, both the pedestal and the statue are damaged with parts missing. If there used to be an inscription on the pedestal, it is entirely lost. Slightly larger than the previous sculpture, it measures 31.24 cm in height. Sarasvatī's left shoulder is missing, and the image is cracked at the level of the breasts and below the knees. The goddess stands in *tribhaṅga* posture on a lotus atop the pedestal, holding the long-stemmed lotus in her right hand and the manuscript in her left. She is dressed and adorned in much the same manner as the earlier Ākoṭā image (fig.12). Her halo is more ornate, consisting of a lotus design in the center, surrounded by a circle of beads, and her eyes are inlaid with silver.

[75] See U. P. Shah's charts in 1941, pp.215–18.

7.3 *Bronze from ca. 700*

A third, very small (13.46 cm in height) Sarasvatī from Ākoṭā dates from ca. 700, and is even more damaged.[76] The pedestal is lost, the image is in two pieces, broken at the level of the hips, and only a fragment of the halo survives. As in the other bronzes, the goddess, standing in *tribhaṅga* posture, carries a long lotus stalk, most of which is missing, and a manuscript. Furthermore, the deity's crown is made, in this case, of five, rather than three, projections.

7.4 *Vasantgarh Bronze from ca. 650–75*

Stylistically akin to these Ākoṭā images is the above-mentioned Sarasvatī from Vasantgarh (known today as Vantaparagadh in southern Rajasthan, near Gujarat) dating from ca. 650–75 and measuring 39.37 cm in height.[77] The image is now in the Mahāvīrasvāmī temple in Pindawara and has been erroneously worshipped as Cakreśvarī.[78] The goddess stands on a lotus between two jars atop a pedestal, holding the long-stemmed lotus in her right hand and the manuscript in her left. She is dressed and adorned in the same manner as the Ākoṭā bronzes. Her crown is particularly elaborate, topped with a representation of the sun with a *makara* on each side. As in the case of other images of Vasantgarh, local worshippers have thickened the lines of her eyebrows.[79]

The ornate crown of the Vasantgarh Sarasvatī may or may not be simply decorative. Although the presence of the sun is unclear, the *makara*, a marine monster derived from the fish, the elephant, and the crocodile,[80] is associated with rivers. Its aquatic character naturally makes it the mount of marine and river divinities, thus associating this mythical creature with Varuṇa,[81] Gaṅgā, and Yamunā.[82] It might also be noted that

[76] See U. P. Shah 1959, p.46, pl.37.
[77] U. P. Shah 1941, p.199, fig.2; 1959, p.43, pl.19.
[78] U. P. Shah 1941, p.199.
[79] U. P. Shah 1955–56, p.61.
[80] The different types of *makara* are discussed in Viennot 1954. The ones found on Sarasvatī's crown belong, according to Viennot's categorization, to the northern type derived from the elephant (p.190).
[81] Banerjea 1956, pp.526–27.
[82] de Mallmann 1963, p.233. The *makara*, it should be noted, is not exclusively associated with marine and river divinities. It also appears as the ensign of Kāma.

South Indian wood sculptors of chariots often represent a *vīṇā*-playing goddess with a *makara* mount, which, however, is unrelated to the Vasantgarh bronze.[83]

7.5 *Sarasvatī and the Vidyādevīs*

In all the Jain images we have seen, Sarasvatī appears as goddess of knowledge with manuscript in hand. According to B. C. Bhattacharya in his study of Jain iconography, Sarasvatī is Śrutadevī, head of a group of sixteen goddesses called Vidyādevīs, who began to appear in Jain literature in ca. 500 C.E.[84] This is a misconception, reiterated also in other studies.[85] The Vidyādevīs are not goddesses of learning, as U. P. Shah explains in his detailed study on this group: they are goddesses with magical powers who propagate Jain faith and worship the Tīrthaṅkaras.[86] Sarasvatī, however, is indeed Śrutadevī (e.g., Hemacandra's *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi* of the twelfth or thirteenth century),[87] and as such presides over the preaching of the Tīrthaṅkaras. Jain texts, furthermore, are described as her limbs and ornaments.[88] That being so, the function of the Vidyādevīs belongs to the devotional aspect of Jainism, while that of Sarasvatī is in the realm of textual knowledge. In terms of Jaina cosmology, as John Cort explains,[89] the various goddesses reside in three different realms: Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī dwell in the upper realm (*ūrdhvaloka*), the Vidyādevīs in the middle realm (*tiryagloka*), and the Yakṣī attendants of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras in the lower realm (*adholoka*). Sarasvatī does not hold a position of leadership in relation to the Vidyādevīs.[90] The connections we find between our goddess and this group of divinities are the iconographic features she shares with certain forms of Mahāmānasī, the sixteenth Vidyādevī, in two twelfth-century sculptures,[91] and the appearance of Sarasvatī's name in a very small number of later

[83] de Mallmann 1963, p.190, note 2.
[84] Bhattacharya 1939 (rev. ed. 1974, p.163). For literature on the Vidyādevīs (centuries later than 500 C.E.), see U. P. Shah 1947.
[85] E.g., Yasodadevi 1963, p.686.
[86] U. P. Shah 1947. See especially p.170.
[87] U. P. Shah 1941, p.196.
[88] Ibid., p.196. Shah refers to the *Pratiṣṭhātilaka* (pp.761–62) and the *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhra* (6:27–32) of the tenth or the eleventh century.
[89] Cort 1987, p.236.
[90] U. P. Shah 1947, p.170.
[91] Ibid., p.166.

lists of the Vidyādevīs, such as in a thirteenth-century manuscript which also includes miniatures of the goddesses.[92]

8. Mātṛkā Brahmāṇī Sculptures

Brahmāṇī, as we have seen, is Brahmā's consort, a form of Sarasvatī. In iconography she is distinguished from Sarasvatī by her four heads (*Matsya Purāṇa* 261:24d *caturvaktrā*), three of which can be seen. Brahmāṇī is also one of the Mothers (Mātṛ or Mātṛkā), a group of goddesses whose number and names become standardized after the Gupta period, although surviving images are recognizable from about the beginning of the Christian era.[93] In this form, Brahmāṇī is never referred to as Sarasvatī. By about the seventh century, representations of the group of Mātṛkās become individually distinguishable.

The Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara has two sixth-century sculptures of Brahmāṇī from Gujarat, both made in black stone: one from Koteswar, Banaskantha District (fig.14) and another one from the Sabarkantha District.[94] In the Banaskantha image illustrated here, the goddess is seated, carrying what seem to be a water pot in her left hand and a rosary in her right—just as the *Matsya Purāṇa* prescribes (261:25b *sākṣasūtrakamaṇḍaluḥ*). Also in agreement with the *Matsya Purāṇa* (261:25a *haṃsādhirūḍhā kartavyā*), a *haṃsa* appears below her. Although she is four-faced (three faces visible), she is not, as the Purāṇa stipulates, four-armed (MtP 261:24cd *brahmāṇī brahmasadṛśī caturvaktrā caturbhujā //*). A small figure, a child according to U. P. Shah,[95] can be seen to her right below. The presence of a child would be appropriate to a Mātṛkā.

The Sabarkantha Brahmāṇī is likewise two-armed, carrying a rosary in her right hand. Her left hand and its implement are broken off, but she seems also to have carried a water pot. While the *haṃsa* appears below, there is no figure of a child in this image. Shah mentions another Mātṛkā

[92] U. P. Shah 1941, p.203, fig.10; 1947, p.121. This is a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Upadeśamālāvṛtti*.

[93] Coburn 1984, pp.313–30; Tiwari 1985, pp.95–181.

[94] Nagar 1992, pl.73.

[95] In Mankad 1962, p.30.

Brahmāṇī of about the seventh century in the Rajputana Museum of Ajmer.[96] Most other examples, however, are later.[97]

9. Ellorā Onward

At Ellorā, Sarasvatī appears in various forms in caves dating from the eighth to the tenth century. Sarasvatī's most renowned representation here is in the shrine of the river goddesses in Cave 16: Gaṅgā stands on a *makara* in the center, with Sarasvatī on a lotus to her right (fig.15), and Yamunā on a tortoise to her left.[98] Likewise in Cave 16, there is an image of Brahmā flanked by Sarasvatī on his right and Sāvitrī on his left,[99] as prescribed by the *Matsya Purāṇa* (260:44cd *vāmapārśve 'sya sāvitrīṃ dakṣiṇe ca sarasvatīm //*). Brahmāṇī amidst sets of Mātṛkās is found in Caves 16 and 22.[100] In the Jain Cave 32, which may be as late as the tenth century, Sarasvatī appears seated and four-armed, holding lotuses in her upper hands and a manuscript in her lower left (her lower right is damaged).[101]

Sarasvatī images dating from the ninth century onward are numerous. The most common iconography, seen even in modern representations, does not follow the *Matsya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (*vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book), but agrees with one of the descriptions in the *Agni Purāṇa*, which omits the water pot (50:16ab *pustākṣamālikāhastā vīṇāhastā sarasvatī /*).[102] This type of four-armed image, holding

[96] U. P. Shah 1955–56, p.55. An early medieval example from the Allahabad Museum is also illustrated in Nagar 1992, pl.74.

[97] Later examples are reproduced in Nagar 1992, pls.75–79 and Pal 1997, pls.231–34, for instance.

[98] At Elephanta (sixth century) a three-headed female figure in a cup or a shell rises from the crown of the main image of Śiva Mahādeva. Fergusson and Burgess (n.d., p.470) have suggested that this figure represents the three rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā, and Sarasvatī.

[99] Gupte and Mahajan 1962, p.191.

[100] Ibid., pp.128, 203. There is a drawing of the Mātṛkās in Cave 16 in Fergusson and Burgess, pl.LXXII.

[101] U. P. Shah 1941, p.207, pl.18; N. Ghosh 1984, pl.37:2; Parimoo, Kannal, and Panikkar 1988, pl.110. A detailed examination of all of the Sarasvatī images at Ellorā extends beyond the scope of this study, but should indeed be taken up at some point. Errors in identification, it must be noted, have occurred, as in the case of the Mahāmāyurī image of Cave 6, which Fergusson and Burgess (p.375) considered to be Sarasvatī.

[102] The same set of objects as in the *Agni Purāṇa* appears also in the *Skanda Purāṇa* (6:46:17–19 in the Nag Publishers' edition of 1986–87). For the dating of the *Agni Purāṇa*, see Rocher 1986, pp.136–37. On the *Skanda Purāṇa*, see introduction to the new critical edition, vol.1 of which was published in 1998 (*The Skandapurāṇa. Volume 1*).

book, rosary, and *vīṇā*, can be seen, for instance, in the tenth-century sandstone sculpture from Mathurā now at The British Museum (fig.16). A foreshadowing of this iconography is found in the seventh-century or earlier image of Sarasvatī with two female attendants in a medallion at the State Museum, Lucknow (fig.10): while the goddess plays the *vīṇā* with her two principal hands (catching the edges of her scarf and sari with one secondary hand and holding perhaps a lotus in the other), her attendants below carry the rosary and the manuscript. Typically, in ninth-century-onward representations, Sarasvatī's mount the *haṃsa* appears below.[103] We have already noted the presence of *haṃsa* in the seventh-century Mathurā sculpture in the Indian Museum (fig.11) and the sixth-century Brahmāṇī images at the Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara (fig.14, p.246 above). The lotus and a *mudrā* (usually *varada*) are also common features in the goddess's later representations. Indeed, variations in the implements with which Sarasvatī is depicted are even more numerous than in the many iconographic descriptions found in the Purāṇas. By the eleventh century, six- and eight-armed forms of the goddess begin to appear,[104] including South Indian images showing our multi-armed Sarasvatī dancing.[105]

What we see, then, amongst the images discussed in this chapter are a number of representations erroneously identified as Sarasvatī (Bhārhut, Gandhāra, Samudragupta and Samācāradeva coins) and one mistakenly dated sculpture (Ghaṇṭaśāla). This brings the number of known-to-be-extant, pre-eighth-century images of Sarasvatī to nine, to which may be added also the Brahmāṇī sculptures. Of the nine, there are no less than five Jain representations, one of which (Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā) happens to be the earliest extant image of Sarasvatī from about the third century C.E. Of the remaining four (sculptures from Uttar Pradesh), the one from Sārnāth could possibly be a Buddhist figure.

[103] As a postscript on Sarasvatī's mount, Diwakar Acharya, Visiting Lecturer at Kyoto University, has kindly informed me (personal communication, 1 March 2007) that he discovered a Jain manuscript of the *Praśnavyākaraṇa* with the commentary *Darśanajyotis* by the sixth-century Jīvabhogin, where the commentator mentions the peacock mount of Śrutadevatā Sarasvatī. There are no extant pre-eighth-century images that I am aware of, however, that depict the goddess with a peacock.

[104] Representations of six- and eight-armed forms can be seen in Khajurāho for instance (Agarwal 1964, pp.59–60).

[105] See, for example, K. Bhattacharyya 1983, p.99, pls.32–33. There are four-, six-, and eight-armed dancing images.

The Jains clearly worshipped Sarasvatī as a goddess of knowledge, as indicated by the manuscript held in her hand in all the early surviving Jain images: first in the sandstone sculpture from Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā (near Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh) from about the third century C.E., and then, some four centuries or so later, in the three small bronze statues from Ākoṭā (Gujarat) dating from 600–700 and the related small bronze from Vasantgarh (southern Rajasthan, near Gujarat) from 650–75. It is interesting that, in contrast, the presumed Hindu images of the sixth to the seventh century from Uttar Pradesh, as well as the similar sixth-century one from Sārnāth (also in Uttar Pradesh), depict her playing the *vīṇā*, highlighting her musical aspect. This is particularly evident in the first Uttar Pradesh representation (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston), where Sarasvatī is surrounded by a lively entourage of musicians and dancers. Nevertheless, in the sculpture within the medallion in the State Museum, Lucknow, Sarasvatī's attendant carries her manuscript, signalling her knowledge aspect.

We have here, then, representations of Sarasvatī in terms of the functions she was endowed with in textual sources from the Vedas to the early Purāṇas. Sarasvatī's connection with knowledge, as we have seen, is the earlier of the two: it surfaces in the Brāhmaṇas (900–500 B.C.E.) through her identification with speech, the embodiment of knowledge, and is established as particular to Sarasvatī from the *Mahābhārata* (mid-second century B.C.E. to the year zero) onward. Her music aspect, on the other hand, does not arise until about the third to the sixth century C.E. (later *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*), although Vāc, as a woman, is connected with music already in the Brāhmaṇas. The Jain images (third to seventh century), therefore, reflect an earlier feature of Sarasvatī, necessarily applied, in a Jain context, to Jain texts. It is in this knowledge aspect that Sarasvatī continued to be worshipped amongst the Jains, even when the *vīṇā* was later also placed in her hands.[106] The musical aspect of roughly the Gupta period, on the other hand, is represented in the four Uttar Pradesh images of the sixth and the seventh century. Only the State Museum, Lucknow sculpture combines both of Sarasvatī's features by placing the *vīṇā* in her hands and the manuscript in her attendant's hands.

With the exception of the Lucknow image, therefore, her two functions have a separate, independent existence in surviving sculptures of Sarasvatī up to about 700 C.E., in that she is depicted either as goddess

[106] See U. P. Shah 1941.

of knowledge or as goddess of music, but not as both in one and the same representation. This conclusion, it must be emphasized, is necessarily based only on the small number of extant (or known to be extant) images, and had more examples survived or should more examples be found, perhaps this conclusion would have to be revised. On the basis of these limited resources, it may be said that beginning with the ca. seventh-century Lucknow sculpture, the symbols of Sarasvatī's functions in the form of the manuscript and the *vīṇā* are combined, and in later Hindu (see fig.16) and Jain representations are both placed in Sarasvatī's hands, as the *Matsya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* iconographic descriptions (*vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book) intended. Indeed, when the manuscript is put in the deity's hands rather than in her attendant's hands, it shifts to center stage, thereby highlighting, rather than simply indicating, her function as goddess of knowledge.

As for Sarasvatī's original riverine aspect, which as a geographical phenomenon lends itself less easily to representation, she is rarely depicted purely as a river goddess. At Ellorā, as we have seen, our deity appears together with Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the shrine of the river goddesses. Sarasvatī is more frequently portrayed, often with Sāvitrī, as spouse of Brahmā, as at Ellorā, and there are, furthermore, a significant number of images of Mātṛkā Brahmāṇī (fig.14).

CHAPTER TWELVE

IMAGES CORRESPONDING TO YIJING'S GODDESS

This chapter addresses the model for the eight-armed weapon-bearing form assumed by Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, by comparing Yijing's weapon-bearing description with analogous images. As we have seen, Kauṇḍinya's praises in the sutra correspond roughly to an early stage in the composition of the *Skanda Purāṇa* (prior to the sixth or seventh century), wherein Vindhyavāsinī is already connected with Pārvatī's *tapas* and has acquired a warrior character that is not yet clearly defined.[1] The *tapas*-practising Pārvatī appears in Kauṇḍinya's three-stanza praise, while an eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess corresponding to Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī, identified in the Purāṇa with Mahiṣāsuramardinī, lends her form to Sarasvatī in Kauṇḍinya's eight-stanza praise. Furthermore, Vindhyavāsinī is invoked in the *Harivaṃśa* hymn recited by Yijing's Kauṇḍinya. The eight-armed weapon-bearing form not only agrees with Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī's description in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, but also with actual images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī. While Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī's weapons are, with the exception of the bow and quivers (*nibaddhatūṇīrayugā pragṛhītaśarāsanā* /),[2] not listed in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, Mahiṣāsuramardinī's implements can be seen in her representations, and therefore compared to Yijing's description of Biancaitian. In this chapter, I present art historical evidence to show the iconographic similarity between Yijing's eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess and images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

Following a brief summary of the iconographic developments in early representations of Mahiṣāsuramardinī and, where available, their corresponding textual sources, some of the earliest extant eight-armed sculptures of the buffalo-demon-slaying goddess are introduced below. The eight-armed examples are drawn primarily from India, but also from Afghanistan and Southeast Asia.

[1] See pp.213–14 above.
[2] *Skanda Purāṇa* 58:14ab (Yokochi 2004, p.260).

1. Mahiṣāsuramardinī Images

1.1 *Kuṣāṇa Period*

The earliest extant representations of Mahiṣāsuramardinī date from the Kuṣāṇa period,[3] and have no corresponding textual sources. The Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich has two small votive tablets made of sandstone from Rājakhera (Agra District): in the one listed as MU 199 by the museum, the better preserved of the two, the four-armed goddess holds a short-handled trident and a shield, and strangles the buffalo with her lower arms.[4] The Archaeological Museum in Mathurā has several similar images, suggesting that Mahiṣāsuramardinī was likely quite popular in this region during the Kuṣāṇa period. A group of eight small, badly eroded slabs of the goddess carved in high relief, all of the same type according to Odette Viennot, was discovered in a well in Mathurā (well II, Palekhera).[5] It is clear in the best preserved carving of this group that Mahiṣāsuramardinī is depicted with six arms, pressing down the buffalo with her lowest pair of hands and holding a lotus garland in horizontal position above her head with her uppermost pair of hands.[6] Further six-armed examples in the Kuṣāṇa style of Mathurā are preserved in the same Archaeological Museum in Mathurā, in the Indian Museum in Kolkata, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, as well as in J. C. Harle's private collection.[7] Herbert Härtel, furthermore, discovered two terracotta plaques during his excavations at Sonkh in Mathurā, one of which he dates to the reign of Vāsudeva I/Kaniṣka III and another, fragmentary one from the time of Kaniṣka I.[8] A notable iconographic feature of the early Kuṣāṇa images is that the goddess does not subdue the buffalo-demon with her weapons, but rather with her bare hands. By early Gupta times, already foreshadowed in late Kuṣāṇa examples, she pierces his back with her long-handled trident.[9] Härtel's terracotta plaque of the time of Vāsudeva I/Kaniṣka III in the later Kuṣāṇa period is, as Gritli von Mitterwallner points out, a transitional example: it depicts the goddess holding with her upper hands a short-handled trident above her head, pointing it downward to the buffalo, whom she grasps tightly by the neck, pressing down his backbone, about to stab him.[10]

1.2 *Gupta Period*

Subsequent transitional iconographic developments between the Kuṣāṇa and the fully developed Gupta type can be seen in two of the three early Gupta large cliff reliefs of twelve-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī at Udayagiri (Vidisha District, Madhya Pradesh): the representation on the north wall of the courtyard in front of Cave 6 and the later faithful copy of it to the proper left of the entrance to Cave 17 both preserve the Kuṣāṇa posture of the buffalo, but also include a typical feature of Gupta and succeeding images, a now long-handled trident, no more held over the goddess's head, but actually piercing the demon's back.[11] The third relief of Udayagiri (fig.17), to the proper left of the entrance to Cave 6, is dated 401–02, in the reign of Candragupta II (r. ca. 375–413), according to the inscription above it.[12] In contrast to the other two carvings, it represents the

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[3] The terracotta plaque from the ancient site of Nagar (Jaipur Unit, Rajasthan), now in the Museum in Amber near Jaipur, was dated middle of the first century B.C.E. or first century C.E. by R. C. Agrawala (1958, p.124, fig.1). Gritli von Mitterwallner (1976, pp.203–05), however, has shown that the plaque belongs to about the last quarter of the fourth century. The plaque depicts four-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī holding a shield and a vajra with her upper hands and subduing the buffalo demon with her lower hands. Her mount, the lion, appears below.

[4] von Mitterwallner 1976, figs.1–2 (MU 199–200, respectively). The other image (MU 200) is of slightly later date than MU 199, and the implements are no longer clearly discernible. MU 199 measures 18.5 cm in height, while MU 200 measures 22 cm. These representations are discussed in von Mitterwallner 1976, pp.196–98.

[5] Viennot 1956, p.368, fig.1. None of the images is much more than 20 cm in height. Fig.1 (ht. 20.25 cm) is the best preserved of the group.

[6] For the identification of the garland over her head, which has been the subject of much speculation amongst art historians, see Harle 1970, 1971–72. The middle right arm is broken off, while the middle left holds an object that Viennot (1956, p.371) was unable to identify.

[7] Viennot 1956, p.368; R. C. Agrawala 1958, pp.123–24; Harle 1970, p.147, figs.1, 6–7. The Archaeological Museum, Mathurā also has a four-armed example (no.2317) of unknown provenance from the later Kuṣāṇa period, where the goddess subdues the buffalo with her lower arms and carries a trident and a spear in her upper arms, while the lion appears below (von Mitterwallner 1976, fig.3).

[8] Härtel 1973, pp.11, 14; figs.12, 15.

[9] von Mitterwallner 1976, pp.199–200.

[10] Härtel 1973, fig.12; von Mitterwallner 1976, p.199.

[11] von Mitterwallner 1976, pp.199–202, figs.4–5. On the Mahiṣāsuramardinī images of Udayagiri, see also Harle 1970, pp.149ff.; 1971–72.

[12] Fleet 1888, pp.21–25, pl.IIB. Despite the inscription above the relief, which refers to the "... gift of the Sankânika, the Mahârâja ... dhala (?) ..." (Fleet translation, p.25), on the basis of style Viennot (1971–72, pp.72–73), followed by Douglas Barrett (1975, p.66), dated it to the beginning of the seventh century. It would seem rather unlikely, however, that the gift by this feudatory king of Candragupta II should be something other than the two reliefs above which the inscription is engraved.

fully developed Gupta type. Holding the buffalo by his left hind leg, after having whirled him around and thrown him to the ground,[13] the goddess pierces his back with the trident in her main right hand—a common theme in centuries to come in central and western India as well as in the western coast.[14] Her remaining arms are filled with new weapons and attributes, such a sword and a bell, frequently encountered in representations of Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the Gupta and succeeding periods.

These carvings of Udayagiri point to changes in the cult of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, as the small votive plaques of the Kuṣāṇa and early Gupta periods are superseded by these large and complex cliff-reliefs. The dramatic increase in the size of the goddess's representations at Udayagiri suggests that she attains a new plateau of importance amongst a following capable of financing such large-scale undertakings. The Udayagiri cliff-reliefs hence also raise the issue of patronage of the goddess by rulers and warriors (Kṣatriyas), which was indeed, as Heinrich von Stietencron points out, an important reason for the existence of so many sculptures of Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[15] Her Kṣatriya patronage, furthermore, is reflected not only in her images, but also in inscriptions: we have just seen the Udayagiri inscription dated 401–02 above the image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī to the left of the entrance to Cave 6, referring to the gift, i.e., the dedication of the reliefs below it, by a feudatory king of Candragupta II. Likewise noteworthy is an inscription from Choṭī Sādrī in Rajasthan dated 491, which records that Mahārāja Gauri built a temple to a goddess identified as Bhramaramātā, who rides a chariot drawn by a lion (lions?), tears a demon (demons?) apart, and takes the form of the female half of Śiva's body.[16]

It is indeed hardly surprising that the demon-slaying goddess's combative stance should render this deity greatly appealing to the warrior class. It should be noted, however, that the *Mahābhārata* attributes the killing of Mahiṣa to the warrior god Skanda (3:221). Nevertheless, early images depict the goddess—and not Skanda—slaying Mahiṣa, which suggests, as von Stietencron explains, that the epic tried to replace the non-Brahmanical cult of the battle goddess with a male Hindu god of

[13] von Mitterwallner 1976, p.201, confirmed by the original *Skanda Purāṇa* cited below on p.256.
[14] von Mitterwallner 1976, p.202, fig.6.
[15] von Stietencron 1983, pp.129, 137.
[16] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol.XXX (see Rao and Sircar 1958), pp.120–27. The corrected reading of the first two stanzas of the inscription appear in Yokochi 1999b, p.102, note 136.

war, but failed. Not only was the goddess not driven out, but she acquired for herself the very implements of the Brahmanical gods responsible for victory, most particularly the vajra, the weapon of the king of the gods Indra, who is the conqueror of the enemies of the gods *par excellence*.[17] The acquisition of the gods' weapons occurs in the *Devī Māhātmya* (2:19–27), wherein Mahiṣāsuramardinī, in conjunction with Vindhyavāsinī, has already developed into the great Warrior Goddess. These same weapons with which the gods endow her then appear in images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, who is often referred to as Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

1.3 *Textual Sources Corresponding to the Gupta Type*

The Gupta-type representation of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, popular between the fifth and the eighth century in northern India, the Deccan, Orissa, Gujarat, and the western coast, follows the Udayagiri cliff-relief of 401–02: the goddess lifts the buffalo either by his hind leg or by his tail, placing her right foot on his head, while she pierces his back or his neck/head with the trident.[18] As Yokochi explains,[19] textual sources corresponding to this type include:

1. the *Caṇḍīśataka* of Bāṇa, court poet to Harṣa (r. 606–47): the foot of the goddess treads on or kicks the buffalo's head, as described in numerous verses, and she thrusts a trident into him.
2. a sixth-century inscription of Anantavarman of the Maukharīs at a cave of the Nāgārjunī Hill next to the Barābar Hill of Bihar, in the Vindhya mountains: the first stanza of this inscription, which records the installation of a Kātyāyanī image in this cave by Anantavarman, extols the goddess's foot.[20]
3. *Skanda Purāṇa* 68:10–23: in recounting the battle between the goddess and Mahiṣa, the description closely parallels, as Yokochi points out, the Gupta type.

[17] von Stietencron 1983, pp.129–30.
[18] Yokochi 1999a, p.66. A catalogue of Gupta-type images from northern India and the Deccan appears in her app.A, pp.75–90, and Postscript, pp.95–98, figs.1–10 (pp.99–103), categorized according to subtypes.
[19] Ibid., pp.66–70.
[20] Fleet 1888, pp.226–28, pl.XXXIB; Thaplyal 1985, pp.19, 137–38, pl.3.

Skanda Purāṇa 68:21–22 reads:

> *viṣahya taṃ tasya tadā prahāraṃ*
> *jagrāha śṛge mahiṣaṃ kareṇa /*
> *udbhrāmya coccaiḥ paritaḥ sarosā*
> *nyapātayad bhūmitale śvasantam //*
>
> *udgṛhya sā vāladhim indraśatroḥ*
> *kṛtvā ca pādaṃ śirasi prasahya /*
> *triśūlam ādāya bibheda pṛṣṭhe*
> *vyayojayac cāsubhir āsu daityam //*
>
> Then, after withstanding his blow,
> she seized Mahiṣa's horn with her hand,
> Whirled him aloft in a fury
> and hurled him panting down onto the earth.
>
> Lifting up the tail of the enemy of Indra (i.e., Mahiṣa)
> and setting foot on his head forcefully,
> She pierced him through the back with a trident
> and immediately deprived the demon of his life.[21]

Given the striking similarity of this *Skanda Purāṇa* passage with the Gupta-type images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Yokochi suggests that the author(s) of the Purāṇa "had the Gupta type of the icon in mind"[22] and identifies an image from Siddhi-kī-guphā at Deogarh as the closest to the above Puranic description.[23]

For our purposes here, it is this Gupta-type image and its textual parallels that are most relevant, as their time-period corresponds roughly to the time at which *tapas*-practising Pārvatī and Vindhyavāsinī, identified with Mahiṣāsuramardinī, were introduced into the Sarasvatī chapter of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. As Yijing's translation contains not only the *Harivaṃśa* hymn, but also the list of weapons carried by the goddess, it is specifically his no longer extant Sanskrit version, in relation to the Gupta-type image and its textual parallels, that is of interest here. Let us consider more closely, therefore, the date of this Sanskrit version.

Unfortunately we do not know how and when the Sanskrit text used by Yijing entered China, but some provisional suggestions may be advanced. The most likely possibility is that Yijing himself acquired this text while in India, perhaps at Nālandā, and brought it back to China at

[21] *Skanda Purāṇa* 68:10–23 is edited and translated in Yokochi 1999a, app.B, pp.90–92.
[22] Yokochi 1999a, p.69.
[23] Ibid., pp.72–75, fig.1. The Siddhi-kī-guphā image is also found in the area apparently indicated by the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

the end of the seventh century. His journey, however, took him through Śrīvijaya, where he might conceivably also have procured it.[24] If, on the other hand, Yijing did not bring back this version of the sutra, then it would necessarily have made its way to China either:

a) while Yijing was in India and Śrīvijaya, between late 671–early 672 to mid-695, sent by Yijing himself or introduced by others; or

b) before Yijing's journey, during the period between Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's translation of 561–78 — if not Baogui's edition of 597 — and late 671–early 672.

This Sanskrit version would then have come into China at the end of the sixth century or more likely during the seventh century. But when would this Sanskrit text corresponding to Yijing's translation have been composed? A reasonable assumption would seem to be sometime between the second half of the sixth, and the seventh century, more likely during the seventh century given Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's rendition of 561–78 and the absence of any other posterior translation to theirs in Baogui's edition of 597. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the Sanskrit version corresponding to Yijing's Chinese rendering was indeed circulating in India at an earlier time, together with other versions, but that it was not acquired, for whatever reason, until Yijing's time. If so, however, it could not have been too much earlier, for if the *Harivaṃśa* hymn was composed very roughly somewhere around the fifth century,[25] then the subsequent development of different versions of the hymn, some perhaps with independent circulation, would not have occurred immediately. Hence a dating of the sixth to seventh century for the Sanskrit text of the sutra used by Yijing remains a reasonable assumption.

The incorporation into the sutra of the *Harivaṃśa* hymn and the list of weapons carried by the goddess, therefore, took place in the sixth to seventh century, most probably during the seventh, and perhaps even during Harṣa's reign (606–47). As the extant Sanskrit version of the sutra and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's translation of 561–78 both refer to the god-

[24] Yijing left Canton between 7 December 671 and 5 January 672 for Śrīvijaya on Sumatra, and from there sailed to the port of Tāmraliptī in eastern India near the Gulf of Bengal, where he arrived on 1 March 673. Twelve years later, in late 685 or early 686, he departed from the same port of Tāmraliptī. Between 30 January and 27 April 686 Yijing was already in Jiecha (which today would correspond to Malaysia) and then went to Śrīvijaya on Sumatra. He left Śrīvijaya for Canton between 11 May and 8 June 693, and arrived in Luoyang between 17 June and 16 July 695. (Forte, personal communication.)
[25] See p.212 above.

dess as eight-armed and include *tapas*-practising Pārvatī,[26] the presence of Pārvatī and Vindhyavāsinī in the sutra can be surmised already during the sixth century, possibly even during the latter half of the fifth. Textual parallels in India should therefore be sought in the fifth to sixth century, i.e., during the Gupta period.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* (58:12–14; 63:55–56), as we have seen,[27] describes Vindhyavāsinī not only as eight-armed—just as the form of the goddess in the surviving Sanskrit sutra, in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, as well as in Yijing—but also as carrying weapons, as in Yijing's translation. With the exception of the bow and two quivers (58:14ab), however, the weapons held in her hands are not specified in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. There is, as far as I know, no textual equivalent for the eight-armed form of Vindhyavāsinī or Mahiṣāsuramardinī that actually lists the objects carried by the goddess.

A ten-armed form is described in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, in a chapter assigned to ca. 550–650, but which may well be later.[28] The list is in fact quite similar to one in the eighth-century *Devī Māhātmya*.[29] The *Matsya Purāṇa*'s Mahiṣāsuramardinī carries ten specified weapons and places her right foot on her lion mount, and the big toe of her left foot on the demon Mahiṣa (260:59–64). Side by side with Yijing's implements, the *Matsya* list reads:

Matsya Purāṇa (260:59–61) ten-armed	Yijing (p.437c2) eight-armed
1. trident	
2. sword	sword
3. wheel	wheel
4. sharp arrow	arrow
5. spear	spear
6. shield	
7. strung bow	bow
8. noose	noose/lasso
9. hook	
10. bell or axe	axe
	vajra

26 See pp.206–07 above.
27 See p.200 above.
28 On the date of the *Matsya Purāṇa* see pp.117–18 above.
29 The *Devī Māhātmya* provides two lists of implements for the great Warrior Goddess: one consisting of nine implements (1:61) and another of thirteen, each given to her by one of the gods (2:19–27). The latter list is very similar to the *Matsya*, including all of the *Matsya*'s objects (both the bell and the axe), with the exception of the hook, and adding the conch, the vajra (as in Yijing), and the staff.

Given the greater number of arms in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, there cannot be a perfect match with Yijing's list. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that, with the exception of the vajra, all the weapons in Yijing appear in the *Matsya Purāṇa* list. Yet, whereas the *Matsya* also specifies the goddess's mount in the form of the lion, there is no mention of a mount in Yijing, although a comparison with the lion among beasts (猶如師子獸中上) does appear immediately preceding the description of the eight-armed, weapon-bearing goddess.

Despite the absence of known textual parallels of the period, eight-armed images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī were in fact produced in significant numbers in different parts of India, not to mention Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. This form of representation is evidently of greatest interest to us here for comparison with the eight-armed goddess described in Yijing. It is, therefore, to the early history of eight-armed, weapon-bearing Mahiṣāsuramardinī images that we now turn.

2. Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī Images

2.1 *India*

An early eight-armed example is the late third-century stele from Mathurā, now in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin (fig.18).[30] Here, in the Kuṣāṇa type, Mahiṣāsuramardinī subdues the buffalo demon with her main pair of hands, grasping him by the neck with left hand and pressing down on his back with her right. Above her head she holds a lotus garland in her uppermost pair of hands, with the sun in her immediately adjacent right hand and the moon in her left. In her middle pair of hands, she holds two upward-pointing weapons, probably a spear in her right and what may be a trident in her left, as in the late Kuṣāṇa four-armed example at the Archaeological Museum, Mathurā (no.2317).[31] In our eight-armed representation, furthermore, the goddess stands upon two lions, indicating a lion throne.

30 von Stietencron 1983, fig.2.
31 von Mitterwallner 1976, fig.3. See also pp.252–53, note 7 above.

The Archaeological Museum, Mathurā also has an eight-armed image from Ramghat, Mathurā, assigned to the 'early medieval period' or to ca. 700.[32] Holding up the buffalo by his tail in vertical position with her lowest left hand and stepping on his head with her left foot, representative of the Gupta type which continued to be produced in post-Gupta times, the goddess holds the garland over her head in her topmost hands. The objects carried in nearly all of the deity's remaining hands have been broken off. According to Yokochi, her lowest right probably held a sword, and one of her right hands might have wielded a lance or a trident that pierced a now damaged part of the buffalo's hip.[33]

Further south, in Karnataka, the Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave of Aihole enshrines the earliest Cāḷukya example of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, assigned to the middle of the sixth century, which likewise happens to be eight-armed.[34] The triumphant goddess stands over the buffalo, her left knee on his back, her lowest left hand pushing his head back to her knee, and her top right stabbing his rump with a trident. She wields, clockwise from her lowest right, sword, parrot, wheel, trident, bow, conch, and shield, with the demon's muzzle in her lowest left. The deity's lion mount stands to her left.

The Durgā Temple at Aihole, furthermore, has another, similar eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī (fig.19, stone, ht. 125 cm) dating from the reign of Vijayāditya (696–733/4).[35] The goddess stands with her left foot (leg missing) on the back of the buffalo, piercing his neck with a trident. Three of her left arms, including two of their implements, are broken off. In her remaining hands, the deity carries, clockwise from her bottom right, sword, arrow (or vajra), wheel, trident, bell, and conch. As Gary Michael Tartakov and Vidya Dehejia suggest, the now lost implements in the goddess's missing lower left arms would have been either the buffalo's muzzle or a shield in her natural arm, and probably the bow in her lowest left. Furthermore, Mahiṣāsuramardinī's lion appears below, to the deity's left.

A number of eighth-century images with similar iconography were found in Ālampūr in Andhra Pradesh, and are now kept at the Ālampūr Museum. In one of them (fig.20),[36] with her right hands eight-armed

[32] Harle 1970, pp.148ff., fig.2; Viennot 1971–72, pp.72, 74ff., pl.XIII, fig.8; D. Barrett 1975, p.66; Yokochi 1999a, p.87.
[33] Yokochi 1999a, p.87.
[34] Tartakov and Dehejia 1984–85, pp.316–17, fig.11.
[35] Ibid., p.317, fig.12.
[36] Fig.20 is a stone image, measuring 81 x 65 cm.

Mahiṣāsuramardinī pulls out an arrow, holds the wheel and the sword, and stabs with the trident the human-looking demon figure emerging from the neck of the buffalo.[37] In her left hands, she carries the bow, the conch, and the bell, while her central hand grasps the head of the demon figure. The lion is seated to the goddess's lower right.

Further south still, there are three Pallava representations of eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī at Mahābalipuram (Māmallapuram) in Tamil Nadu. The best known, comparable in scale to the Udayagiri cliff-reliefs, is the large late-seventh-century panel filling the entire north wall in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa (fig.21).[38] Almost four meters long, and two and one-half meters high, it vividly depicts the battle scene between the goddess mounted on her lion and the now buffalo-headed, human-bodied demon of formidable size. The opponents are each surrounded by an army of supporters, forming a kind of aureole around them. In the case of the goddess, the eight Gaṇas encircling her like a moon crescent constitute the outer emanation of the aureole, while her arms form the first emanation. She reaches back with her top right, natural hand to pull out an arrow so as to string it on her bow in her matching left, while her other arms, clockwise from her lowest right, wield sword, bell, wheel, conch, noose, and shield. The relatively small-looking goddess charges forward on her lion against her formidable opponent, who despite his larger size is forced to retreat, leaning backward and downward. His collapsing army of Asuras foreshadows his imminent doom. This type of dramatic representation set just before the triumph of the goddess amidst an array of characters has been labelled 'Mahiṣāsura sainyavadha' (the slaying of the armies of Mahiṣa) by Tartakov and Dehejia in co-relation to—but not necessarily based on—a scene in the *Devī Māhātmya*.[39]

Half a century later, a strikingly similar Cāḷukya relief of 733/734–744/745 appears atop a pillar in the Mallikārjuna Temple of Paṭṭadakal in Karnataka.[40] Just over a meter in length, it is a considerably reduced representation of Mahiṣāsuramardinī engaged in fierce battle against the

[37] The textual parallels for the post-Gupta type of image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī in which the anthropomorphic form of the demon Mahiṣa emerges from the neck of the buffalo, whose head has been cut off, are found, as Yokochi explains (1999a, pp.66–67), in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (260:55c–66b), the *Devī Māhātmya* (3:37–39), and the *Agni Purāṇa* (50:1–6).
[38] Tartakov and Dehejia 1984–85, pp.289–91, fig.2.
[39] Ibid., p.291.
[40] Ibid., pp.290–92, figs.1, 3.

buffalo demon. The goddess is likewise depicted here with eight arms, carrying apparently the same implements as in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa wall relief of Mahābalipuram.[41]

Another type of eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī is found in the late-seventh-century Trimūrti Maṇḍapa (fig.22) and Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa of Mahābalipuram, where the victorious goddess stands on the severed head of the buffalo.[42] This is a common type of both Pallava and Cāḷukya Mahiṣāsuramardinī imagery,[43] although not exclusive to them. In the sculpture located in the niche to the proper left of the Trimūrti Maṇḍapa, the goddess wields the hand gesture of no fear (*abhaya mudrā*), the bell, sword, wheel, conch, bow, and shield, holding one hand on the hip. The Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa image carries the same implements with the addition of the cup instead of the *abhaya mudrā* and the presence of a parrot on her left wrist.

2.2 *Afghanistan*

Depictions of the buffalo-demon-slaying goddess, furthermore, have been discovered in Afghanistan. A number of finds, such as the seventh- or eighth-century Scorretti Marble in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome and the marble from Gardez, which used to be in the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul (fig.23),[44] indicate that the deity was worshipped there during the Turki Śāhi period (ca. 660–890).[45] Although it is not possible to know how many arms the Scorretti Mahiṣāsuramardinī originally had, the Gardez image is eight-armed: while the goddess's

[41] Two of the implements, which would correspond to the bell and the noose in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa relief, are indistinct. Comparable to the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa relief of Mahābalipuram and the Mallikārjuna Temple pillar carving of Paṭṭadakal is the eighth- to ninth-century 'Mahiṣāsura sainyavadha' relief at the Kailāsanāth Temple (Cave 16) of Ellorā, Maharashtra, where the goddess is also depicted with eight arms. See Tartakov and Dehejia 1984–85, fig.7.

[42] Ibid., p.328, figs.44–45. For the dating of the cave-temples, see K. R. Srinivasan 1964, pp.43–46. As noted by Tartakov and Dehejia (1984–85, p.340), Ilango Adigal's Tamil epic poem, the *Śilappadigāram* (ca. 500 C.E.), describes how the goddess stands on the head of the buffalo.

[43] Tartakov and Dehejia 1984–85, pp.328–31.

[44] The collection of the National Museum in Kabul was dispersed, and the location of the Gardez group is not known.

[45] Taddei 1973, pp.207–08. On the Scorretti Marble, see Schlumberger 1955, Goetz 1957, and especially Kuwayama 1976, pp.378ff. (figs.7–8). On the marble group from Gardez, see Kuwayama 1976, pp.379ff. (fig.9), who provides further references.

front right arm stabs Mahiṣa with a dagger, her front left arm holds his head; another right arm holds his tail, and although two right arms are missing, one of them seems to have held the trident that is stabbing the demon's rump; one of the left arms is also lost, while the two others carry what seems to be a wheel and a less easily identifiable object.[46] Although the Scorretti marble and the one from Gardez are Hindu images, an eighth-century, highly damaged clay sculpture of a four-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī discovered by Maurizio Taddei in 1969 appears in the Buddhist site of Tapa Sardār, a hillock near Ghaznī.[47] Of the implements held by the goddess, whose image survives in fragments, only the vajra in one of her right hands is clearly discernible. The presence of her mount is indicated by the lion's paw, still visible on the hind portion of the almost entirely surviving buffalo.[48]

2.3 *Southeast Asia*

Further examples of Mahiṣāsuramardinī images are also to be found in Southeast Asia. The National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, for instance, has seventh- to eighth-century sandstone sculptures depicting the goddess with four arms.[49] The Museum Nasional Indonesia in Jakarta has a number of eighth- to ninth-century examples, such as an image from Semarang in central Java (fig.24), showing Mahiṣāsuramardinī in eight-armed form, carrying the usual set of implements, including the wheel, conch, sword, trident, bow and arrow, and often holding the demon by the tail and the hair. Additional Indonesian representations of the eight-armed goddess are, for example, in Prambanan and Sambisari. But perhaps the best known image of an eight-armed Indonesian Mahiṣāsuramardinī is the beautiful late-thirteenth-century Hindu-Javanese stone sculpture in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden.[50]

[46] For Kuwayama (1976, p.379), these last two objects are 'unidentified.'

[47] Taddei 1973, 1989; Taddei and Verardi 1978.

[48] See also Tucci 1963, who discusses an eighth- or ninth-century image discovered in Swāt in 1962. It represents a fierce, eight-armed goddess with her foot on a wild goat or an ibex. Clearly this is not Mahiṣāsuramardinī, but, as Tucci explains, "must represent a peculiar local variety of some homologous religious entities ..." (p.152).

[49] One of these appears in Boisselier 1955, pl.24A. For other early examples, see Boisselier 1963, figs.26 (discussed on p.73), 65 (discussed on pp.130–31).

[50] See Zimmer 1983, vol.1, p.104; vol.2, pls.502–03; Fontein et al. 1990, pp.158–59, fig.23.

From the early surviving representations of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, we can see that the goddess was revered from at least the Kuṣāṇa period and depicted with different numbers of arms and implements. Her worship, furthermore, was not confined to India, as attested by extant images from Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. One might add, moreover, the Buddhist veneration of Caṇḍī (Cuṇḍī) in different forms in Tibet and China.[51] Caṇḍī or Caṇḍikā may have been the most popular epithet of the rising Warrior Goddess from the sixth to the eighth century, as evidenced also by the above mentioned *Caṇḍīśataka* 'hundred verses to Caṇḍī' of Bāṇa, one of the textual sources corresponding to the Gupta-type of Mahiṣāsuramardinī representation.[52] There are, for example, Tang-period *dhāraṇī* invoking Caṇḍī or Cuṇḍī (Zhunti 准胝), who comes to be identified with Mārīcī (Molizhi 摩利支) and from whom the Japanese Juntei Kannon 准胝觀音 (Cuṇḍī Avalokiteśvara) derives her name.[53]

Eight-armed sculptures of Mahiṣāsuramardinī were produced from at least the late third century and in significant numbers. However, the implements with which the eight-armed goddess was endowed varied based on time-period, region, and, it would seem, also from image to image (like the late-seventh-century Mahābalipuram sculptures in the Trimūrti Maṇḍapa and the Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa, where eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī stands on the severed head of the buffalo).[54] I am not aware of any textual sources corresponding to the eight-armed form that might list the implements held by Mahiṣāsuramardinī or Vindhyavāsinī. The *Skanda Purāṇa*, as we have seen, tells us that Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī is eight-armed and carries weapons, yet the Purāṇa refrains from enumerating them, with the exception of the bow and two quivers.[55]

3. Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Yijing's Goddess

If we compare the above discussed eight-armed images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī with Yijing's description of the eight-armed, weapon-bearing

[51] See Whitaker 1963 and Gimello 2004.

[52] See p.255 above. On Caṇḍī and Caṇḍikā, see Coburn 1984, pp.94–98, and Yokochi 2004, p.16.

[53] See Whitaker 1963 and Gimello 2004. Tang-period *dhāraṇī* appear, for instance, in T. vol.20, no.1034, p.17a. On Indian images of Mārīcī, see Bautze-Picron 2001.

[54] See p.262 above.

[55] See p.200 above.

goddess, there is no perfect match. But, despite the fact that the eight implements are never exactly the same, we can find all the weapons listed in Yijing's iconographic description in Mahiṣāsuramardinī's various extant representations. In the eight-armed sculptures discussed above, we have noted the bow and arrows, the wheel, the sword, the vajra,[56] the noose,[57] not to mention the trident, which is related to the spear, in that it is essentially a three-pronged spear. The axe, furthermore, can be seen in slightly later images, such as a tenth-century sculpture of a ten-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Bihar, now in the National Museum in New Delhi.[58] The wheel, it should be noted, acquires the connotation of the Wheel of the Law in a Buddhist context. When the jagged-edged wheel is thrown, it breaks in its course all obstacles arisen from ignorance and delimits the territory of the Buddha (*buddhakṣetra*).[59] More specifically in our sutra, it marks the boundary of the country wherein the *Sutra of Golden Light* is upheld and, very importantly, protects it, assuring the continued reign and prosperity of its ruler.

We can, therefore, speak of iconographic similarity between eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī images and Yijing's likewise eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess. A central feature of Mahiṣāsuramardinī iconography, however, is indeed missing in Yijing: the buffalo demon Mahiṣa. Perhaps existing Mahiṣāsuramardinī images were used as a basic model for the representation of the warrior goddess Sarasvatī, defender of the Dharma, but the buffalo demon, unnecessary to Sarasvatī, was simply discarded. By the seventh century, the most probable date for Yijing's Sanskrit manuscript of the sutra, Mahiṣāsuramardinī had become identified, in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, with likewise eight-armed Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī, born of the dark sheath of *tapas*-practising Pārvatī. In fact, Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī's eight arms might have been inspired by Mahiṣāsuramardinī images.

We have then, in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, *tapas*-practising Pārvatī, Vindhyavāsinī, and an eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess quite pos-

[56] Amongst the images examined here, the vajra may appear in fig.19 from the Durgā Temple in Aihole (discussed on p.260 above) and is clearly visible in the Buddhist image from Tapa Sardār (see p.263 above).

[57] See fig.21 from the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa, Mahābalipuram (discussed on p.261 above).

[58] I am grateful to Koezuka Takashi 肥塚隆, Professor Emeritus of Osaka University, for showing me his slide of this image.

[59] Hōbōgirin 1929–2003, fasc.VII, p.963, "Dairin 大輪" by Robert Duquenne. On the wheel, see also Auboyer 1965. Further references in Hōbōgirin 1929-2003, fasc.VII, p.963.

sibly derived from existing Mahiṣāsuramardinī images. The significant number and geographical spread of Mahiṣāsuramardinī sculptures throughout India, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia, notably the deity's eight-armed examples, attest to a particularly influential, widespread, and long-lasting cult of the buffalo-slaying goddess, a success that was secured as she was identified as the great Warrior Goddess popularly called Durgā. In light of the significance of her cult, it is only natural that her images should have been the prototypes for the Buddhist warrior aspect of Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*. By virtue of the influence of the great Warrior Goddess cult, Mahiṣāsuramardinī was able to lend the deity of knowledge and eloquence her form, which proved to be more suitable to Sarasvatī's function as defender of the Dharma.

The *Sutra of Golden Light*, as we have seen, is a text for the protection of the state. The armour-clad, weapon-bearing Four Great Kings of the sutra prophesy the continued reign and prosperity of the ruler who upholds it.[60] It is following their prediction that Sarasvatī appears in the sutra, and, in the Sanskrit version of it used by Yijing, takes a form likely modelled on the highly influential Mahiṣāsuramardinī, who enjoyed extensive patronage from rulers and warriors (Kṣatriyas), as reflected in her representations and inscriptions. Thus, a weapon-wielding goddess worshipped by sovereigns and associated with success in battle provides the model for the appearance assumed by Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, a text addressed to rulers and intended for the safety of the country. It is this form of Sarasvatī, modelled on Mahiṣāsuramardinī, whose ferociousness and sanguinary violence are no longer apparent in the Buddhist context, which we then find in representations of the eight-armed, weapon-bearing Buddhist Biancaitian and in her Japanese form Benzaiten (fig.25).

As far as I am aware, there are no extant Indian examples of the Buddhist eight-armed, weapon-bearing Sarasvatī, although it is possible that such images were actually made. In China and especially in Japan, on the other hand, pictorial as well as sculptural representations based on Yijing's description of the eight-armed, weapon-wielding goddess[61] survive in considerable numbers. In fact, in Japan, where the form has undergone some modifications,[62] images of the popular goddess Benzaiten

60 See p.147 above.

61 See p.197 above.

62 When Benzaiten was identified with a local deity (*kami* 神) of food—and hence wealth—called Ugajin 宇賀神, he began to appear on her head in the form of a coiled snake

continue to be made to this day. We know that representations based on Yijing's description were used for the express purpose of a repentance ritual centering on the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[63] In China they would have been produced from at least the sixth century, although only ninth- to tenth-century pictorial examples of Biancaitian are extant,[64] and in Japan, the earliest image, a clay sculpture from the eighth century (fig.25), may well have been used in the repentance ceremony of the Tōdaiji monastery in Nara in 764.[65] The logical question thus would be whether an analogous repentance ritual centered on the *Sutra of Golden Light* might not have existed also in India? While there is no textual or art historical evidence that I am aware of to support this hypothesis, one cannot entirely discard the possibility that it may have taken place in some form. Yet, whether or not this ritual existed in India, or whether or not images of the deities appearing in the sutra, including our Sarasvatī, would have been used in such a repentance ceremony, the possibility remains that representations of the eight-armed weapon-bearing Sarasvatī might have been produced on the basis of the description in the sutra.

Also noteworthy are extant images of Vāgīśvarī, 'lady of speech,' who has been identified as a Buddhist Sarasvatī.[66] She is depicted with different numbers of arms, including an eight-armed weapon-wielding form,[67] although her implements are not the same as those listed in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. With pincers, Vāgīśvarī pulls out the tongue of a diminutive human figure represented below the goddess.[68] Moreover, this visibly ferocious deity is accompanied by a lion, who, as we have seen, is the usual mount of Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Hence, not surprisingly, the identification of these images of Vāgīśvarī as a Buddhist Sarasvatī has been called into question. According to Joachim Bautze, these representations are neither Buddhist, nor are they depictions of Sarasvatī. He points, rather, to the pantheon of Devī (i.e., the

with the head of an old, bearded man. With this identification, a few of her implements were changed: Yijing's axe, vajra, and lasso were replaced with the stick, wish-fulfilling jewel, and key. For a study of this combined Uga-Benzaiten form, see Ludvik 1999; 2001, pp.287–91.

63 See Ludvik 2001, pp.201–11, 216–26.

64 Ibid., pp.245–47.

65 Ibid., pp.221–23.

66 K. Bhattacharyya 1983, pp.135–37, pls.XLIII–XLV; Bautze 2000.

67 See Bautze 2000, figs.2, 5 on pp.1233, 1236.

68 In a tenth-century sculpture from Nālandā, now kept at the Indian Museum, Kolkata, the goddess pulls the tongues of two figures represented below her. See Bautze 2000, fig.1 on p.1230.

great Goddess), and to one of the ten Mahāvidyās, speech-arresting Bagalāmukhī, to which group also Bhairavī Devī belongs.[69] It is indeed conceivable that, like the *Sutra of Golden Light*'s eight-armed, weapon-wielding Sarasvatī, this form was called Vāgīśvarī under the influence of the growing Warrior Goddess cult, as the great deity was associated with other goddesses, including Vāc and Sarasvatī, who can likewise affect negatively the speech of an adversary.[70] It must be emphasized, however, that while the compelling force behind the forms of the sutra's Sarasvatī and Vāgīśvarī may be the same, the iconography of this tongue-pulling Vāgīśvarī clearly cannot be connected with Yijing's description of Biancaitian.

There is, furthermore, also a Tantric Buddhist Sarasvatī affiliated with Amitābha as Vāgīśa 'lord of speech,' who is hence associated with Sarasvatī as Vāgīśvarī. This form of Sarasvatī (Vajrasarasvatī) is represented with three faces and six arms, holding a sword, lotus, chopper, jewel, wheel, and cranium.[71] The complex subject of Tantric Buddhist iconography, however, is beyond the scope of the present study, and should therefore be the subject of a separate inquiry. Let it simply be noted here that this three-faced, six-armed Sarasvatī clearly does not correspond to the description of Biancaitian in Yijing's translation of our *Sutra of Golden Light* under discussion.

[69] Bautze 2000, pp.1243, 1245.
[70] See p.59 above.
[71] Benoytosh Bhattacharyya 1968, pp.351–52; de Mallmann 1975, pp.337–38; de Mallmann 1976; Chandra 1999–2005, vol.11, pp.3192–93. On the Tantric Buddhist Sarasvatī, see also Shaw 2006, pp.234ff.

IMAGES IN RETROSPECTIVE

Part Four on Images of Sarasvatī explored the identity of representations and of goddesses, first through the pre-eighth-century Hindu, likely Buddhist, and Jain sculptures of Sarasvatī, and then through Mahiṣāsuramardinī images iconographically similar to the eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess described by Yijing as Sarasvatī (Biancaitian).

In Chapter Eleven, it was found that four of the images that have been labelled as 'Sarasvatī' are in fact erroneous identifications, and that one is mistakenly dated. This brings the number of extant pre-eighth-century sculptures of Sarasvatī to nine: five Jain images, one of which (Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā) is the earliest extant representation of Sarasvatī from about the third century C.E.; three Hindu sculptures; and one quite possibly Buddhist image.

In Chapter Twelve, eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī representations from India, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia were shown to be iconographically similar to the eight-armed weapon-bearing goddess described by Yijing as Sarasvatī (Biancaitian). The prototypes for Sarasvatī's eight-armed weapon-wielding Buddhist form, I suggested, were quite possibly images of eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī. While the Chinese name Eloquence Talent Goddess (Biancai tiannü 辯才天女) refers, by way of function, to the goddess of speech and knowledge Sarasvatī, the weapon-bearing form is modelled on depictions of Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

Whereas the misidentifications of the first chapter are simply errors in the scholarship of the last century, the model form of Mahiṣāsuramardinī for the Buddhist Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light* is a far more complex issue: it occurred in India for definite and clearly definable reasons, as we have seen, and was made evident especially through Yijing's surviving Chinese translation (and through the ninth-century Tibetan rendering from Sanskrit, not dealt with here). While under the influence of the developing Warrior Goddess cult other goddesses also made their way into the Sarasvatī chapter of the Buddhist *Sutra of Golden Light*, Sarasvatī, in turn, abandoned her manuscript-bearing, *vīṇā*-playing form, taking on an eight-armed weapon-wielding aspect modelled on images of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, whose warrior-like appearance was clearly more suitable for our goddess in her role as defender of the Dharma.

CONCLUSION

The beautiful Sarasvatī, riverine goddess of knowledge, has taken us on a long journey through texts and images: from the Vedas to the Purāṇas, to the various recensions of the Buddhist *Sutra of Golden Light*; from Jain to Hindu, to Buddhist representations, from the manuscript and *vīṇā*-bearing goddess of knowledge and music to the Buddhist weapon-wielding defender of the Dharma modelled on the demon-slaying Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

We began by looking at the Vedas, where the river goddess, through her association, on the one hand, with the recitation of hymns accompanying rituals performed on her banks, and, on the other hand, with inspired thought (*dhī́*) inseparably tied to the composition of these hymns, was identified with speech (*vā́c*). In the complex and highly organized ritual life instituted by the Kurus in the establishment of their realm in the twelfth to the ninth century B.C.E., speech, which was considered immensely powerful, was of central importance, as the performance and success of sacrifices both depended on flawless utterance. In its efficacy, as we have seen in the Sautrāmaṇī ritual, speech also functioned as a healing device, appropriately placed in the hands of Sarasvatī, who was identified with it. Furthermore, not only potent in sound, but also endowed with meaning, speech conveyed knowledge, most particularly the Vedas, thus transforming Sarasvatī into the goddess of knowledge, as evidenced in the *Mahābhārata* and the early Purāṇas.

Sarasvatī's increasing involvement with speech was paralleled by a systematization of the rituals performed on her banks. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* describes a series of sacrificial sessions held at different stages on the Sarasvatī's shores, proceeding upstream from the place of her disappearance in the sands at Vinaśana to her source at Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa. These mobile *yātsattra* were then recast in the *Mahābhārata*, in true epic proportions, into a lengthy upstream pilgrimage, with stops at numerous *tīrtha*, where elaborate myths replete with Vedic allusions were recounted. The shift in religious practice, from complex, costly sacrifices to the simpler, devotional pilgrimage to sacred sites, reflects a change in the audiences of the respective texts: while the Vedas and their rituals

were accessible only to the twice-born, the epics and the Purāṇas were addressed to the widest possible public and hence many of the practices they described and advocated were open virtually to anyone.

The Sarasvatī river itself was depicted in decreasing dimensions, reflecting what modern geological studies tell us. While the *Ṛg Veda* poets invoked the Sarasvatī as a mighty, flooding river, flowing from the mountains to the ocean, the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* informs us of her disappearance in the sands at Vinaśana. This does not necessarily mean, however, that at the time of the *Ṛg Veda* the Sarasvatī was still a powerful river. The poets may have recalled the once unrivalled Sarasvatī of legendary renown that had already, to some degree, diminished in size, but which they nevertheless described in hyperbolic terms.

The *Mahābhārata*, in turn, with its expanded geography, had the river disappearing at Vinaśana, as in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, but reemerging at various sites, flowing underground, and eventually emptying into the sea, as in the *Ṛg Veda*. Not only was the Sarasvatī's course made to appear Vedic, but through myths accounting for her Vedic-like geography, the river's flow came to be determined by Dharma, the central concern of the epic: to avoid the unrighteous Niṣādas, we are told, the Sarasvatī entered the earth, and to accommodate the twice-born Naimiṣeya seers, she changed her course. The flow of the waters of the riverine goddess of knowledge thereby metamorphosed into the flow of Dharma.

The Purāṇas, putting to good use the Brāhmaṇa myths, clearly transferred Vāc's associations to Sarasvatī. While in the ritualistic universe of the Brāhmaṇas the creator Prajāpati (sacrifice) produced speech, and through speech, either as words or as his consort, created the universe, the creation myth of the Purāṇas was taken out of its sacrificial context, further elaborated, and the names of the major players were changed: Prajāpati became Brahmā and his daughter/consort Vāc became Sarasvatī. As Speech in the Brāhmaṇa myth of the Barter for Soma was associated with music and with the *vīṇā*, the Puranic Sarasvatī as goddess of knowledge came accordingly to preside also over music, symbolized in iconography by the presence of the *vīṇā* in her hands: she was worshipped, in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, to obtain full knowledge of music, and she granted a *vīṇā* to Skanda in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.

The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas introduce the humanization of Sarasvatī by depicting her as a woman with newly found relations to other gods and mortals, including her father/spouse Brahmā. Sarasvatī's human-like appearance occurs as a result of a number of factors, including Brahmanical precedent by way of Vāc, who takes the form of an attractive female in the Barter for Soma; the emergence of the popular *avatāra* ideology, in which deities incarnate as humans, animals, and fish; and the increasing pan-Indian tendency of producing images of the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist pantheons. Although the *Matsya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* describe Sarasvatī as four-armed, carrying *vīṇā*, rosary, water pot, and book, none of the extant early sculptures of the goddess follows this iconography.

Hence textual sources from the Vedas to the early Purāṇas present Sarasvatī under four distinct aspects: as river goddess, to identify her form; as goddess of knowledge and as goddess of music, to define her functions; and as daughter-consort of Brahmā, to locate her in a wider mythological context, where gods and goddesses are paired, in relation to a specific god. In the earliest extant Sarasvatī sculptures, both of her functional aspects are iconographically represented: she appears as goddess of knowledge in five Jain images, and as goddess of music in four (three Hindu and one likely Buddhist) sculptures, with only one (Hindu) of these representations combining both the roles, as Sarasvatī plays her *vīṇā* and her attendant holds a manuscript. However, in the iconography of the early Purāṇas and in post-eighth-century images, the features defining Sarasvatī's special connection with knowledge and music, i.e., the book and the *vīṇā*, are regularly conjoined. It is as goddess of knowledge, nevertheless, that Sarasvatī predominates.

The *Sutra of Golden Light*, the most significant Buddhist source on Sarasvatī, depicts her, in the earliest extant redaction of the sutra represented by Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation of 417, as the preserver of the flawless speech and the memory of the sutra's expounder. This corresponds to the first and earliest section of the Sarasvatī chapter in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, to which were added two more, not found in Dharmakṣema's version, but included in the extant Sanskrit, in Baogui's edition of 597, and in Yijing's translation of 703: Sarasvatī teaches a ritual herbal bath and is then praised by the Brahman Kauṇḍinya as an eight-armed goddess. The bath, as I have discussed, may well be a healing bath inherited from the Vedic magico-religious system of medicine, as well as a kind of consecration (centered on the *abhiṣeka*) ritual familiar to the ruling class, to whom the sutra promises protection for the state. Sarasvatī's well established identity and connections with water and healing in the Vedas rendered the goddess of eloquence and knowledge an appropriate teacher for this bathing ritual.

Kauṇḍinya's successive praises reveal the presence of other goddesses, including *tapas*-practising Pārvatī and Vindhyavāsinī, worshipped in the guise of Sarasvatī, in addition to an eight-armed weapon-bearing form modelled on Mahiṣāsuramardinī and attributed to our goddess of knowledge. Yijing's translation provides the most extensive rendering of Kauṇḍinya's praises, including the list of the weapons carried in the goddess's eight arms and a Chinese translation of a hymn to Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī from the *Harivaṃśa*. As we have seen, there are close iconographic similarities between the *Sutra of Golden Light*'s eight-armed goddess and Indian, Afghan, and Southeast Asian representations of eight-armed, weapon-wielding Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Chinese and Japanese images of Biancaitian/Benzaiten were indeed produced on the basis of Yijing's description, but no extant Indian examples, although they might indeed have been made, may be cited. Since the Sanskrit text Yijing was working from no longer survives, it is especially from his Chinese translation (and from the Tibetan versions) of the *Sutra of Golden Light* that we learn of the impact of the rising Warrior Goddess cult on the Indian Buddhist Sarasvatī. In the Chinese and Japanese representations of Biancaitian/Benzaiten derived from Yijing's description, furthermore, we can recognize the far-reaching waves of influence of the Warrior Goddess extending from India all the way to the shores of Japan. As noted above, eight-armed Benzaiten, in a partly modified form, enjoys widespread popularity in Japan to this day.

We have, then, a twofold Sarasvatī: the goddess of knowledge, as Indians revere her today, with a natural, almost expected, step-by-step conceptual development, versus her battle-goddess appearance, entirely unknown in India, but a very familiar form to Japanese as the eight-armed Eloquence Talent Deity (Benzaiten). While the first is well entrenched in the Indian psyche, the second seems to have completely disappeared from the country of its origin, and, after a journey across East Asia, established herself in Japan. The *Sutra of Golden Light*, particularly in Yijing's Chinese rendering, is a unique document in that it stands straddled between India and East Asia, preserving both of these aspects side by side: the goddess of knowledge, in her anterior embodiment as speech, is known by her name as Eloquence (Talent) Deity and by her function as provider of eloquence and memory; and the eight-armed, weapon-bearing battle goddess is recognized by her form, modelled, as a result of the influence of the growing Warrior Goddess faith, on that of Mahiṣāsuramardinī. This newly assembled package embodies the meeting point of Sarasvatī and of the great Warrior Goddess, merged into one identity, which, although not surviving in India, by virtue of the enormous importance of the *Sutra of Golden Light* throughout Asia, has been funnelled to East Asia and struck deep roots in Japan. I end, in a sense, precisely where my study of Sarasvatī originally began: at the monastery of Tōdaiji in Nara, in the Hokkedō, which houses a large, eighth-century clay sculpture of the eight-armed Eloquence Talent Deity (fig.25), produced on the basis of the description of the goddess in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. Eloquence Talent Deity's name and function encapsulate Sarasvatī's Vedic, epic, and Puranic background, while her form renders visually manifest the intersection of the Indian cults of Sarasvatī and of the great Warrior Goddess, replacing the manuscript and the *vīṇā* of the ravishingly beautiful deity of knowledge with the weapons of the arrestingly ferocious battle goddess.

APPENDIX A

SARASVATĪ CHAPTER OF THE SUTRA OF GOLDEN LIGHT

In this appendix, the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the *Sutra of Golden Light*'s Sarasvatī chapter, together with English translations, are laid out in columns for comparative purposes. I have used Emmerick's (1996) English translation for the Sanskrit, and provided my own renderings for the Chinese. Following the structure of the Sarasvatī chapter, this appendix is divided into three parts:

1. Great Eloquence Deity (pp.278–82)
2. Bath (pp.283–97)
3. Kauṇḍinya's Praises (pp.298–308)
    - 3.1 Shorter Praise (pp.298–300) in three stanzas
    - 3.2 Longer Praise (pp.301–08) in eight stanzas

I have omitted all the spells, including the section of the spell taught by Sarasvatī between Kauṇḍinya's shorter and longer praises, because of the difficulties of reproducing a number of very complicated characters. The list of herbs for the bath, furthermore, appears separately in Appendix B. The additional sections in Yijing (spell rite, *Harivaṃśa* hymn, and words of praise to be recited), moreover, are not included here because they are not held in common, and hence cannot be compared, with the Sanskrit and the other Chinese versions.

1. GREAT ELOQUENCE DEITY

DHARMAKṢEMA pp.344c21–345a3; repr. in Baogui, p.386b24–c5	SANSKRIT p.102, line 13 – p.103, line 13	YIJING p.434b27–c8
爾時大辯天 白佛言	*atha khalu sarasvatī mahādevī* *ekāṃśaṃ cīvaraṃ prāvṛtya* *dakṣiṇajānumaṇḍalaṃ* *pṛthivyāṃ pratiṣṭhāpya* *yena bhagavāṃs* *tenāñjaliṃ praṇamya* *bhagavantam etad avocat //*	爾時大辯才天女 於大衆中 即從座起 頂禮佛足 白佛言
At this time, the Great Eloquence Deity said to the Buddha:	Then indeed Sarasvatī, the great goddess, covered one shoulder with her robe, placed her right knee on the ground, made the gesture of reverence in the direction of the Lord and spoke thus to the Lord:	At this time the great Eloquence Talent Goddess, from amidst the great assembly rose from her seat, prostrated at the feet of the Buddha, and said to the Buddha:
世尊 是說法者 我當益其樂說辯才	*aham api bhadanta bhagavan* *sarasvatī mahādevī* *tasya dharmabhāṇakasya* *bhikṣor vākyavibhūṣaṇārthāya* *pratibhāṇam upasaṃharisyāmi /*	世尊 若有法師 說是金光明最勝王經者 我當益其智慧 具足莊嚴言說之辯
Venerable One, for this expounder of the Law, I will augment his joy in expounding and talent in speech (eloquence)	I, dear Lord, the great goddess Sarasvatī, will contribute eloquence for the sake of adorning the speech of the monk who preaches the Law.	Venerable One, if a Master of the Law expounds this *Golden Light* *Supreme King Sutra*, I will augment his wisdom and supply [him] with eloquence [consisting] of adorned speech.[1]

[1] Nobel (1958a, p.229) translates *bian* 辯 as 'Brillanz' ('brilliance') on the basis of the literal meaning of *pratibhāna* as 'Aufleuchten' ('light up'). See his note 1 on p.229.

DHARMAKṢEMA	SANSKRIT	YIJING
	dhāraṇīṃ cānupradāsyāmi / And I will bestow on him a *dhāraṇī*. *suniruktavacanabhāvaṃ* *sambhāvayiṣyāmi /* I will arrange the substance of his speech so that it is well spoken.	
令其所說 莊嚴次第 善得大智	*mahāntaṃ ca dharma-* *bhāṇakasya bhikṣor* *jñānāvabhāsaṃ kariṣyāmi /*	[Corresponding passage just above: 我當益其智慧
so as to make his exposition magnificent in order that he obtain, soon and well, great wisdom.	I will give great illumination of knowledge to the monk who preaches the Law.	I will augment his wisdom.]
若是經中 有失文字 句義違娑 我能令是說法比丘 次第還得	*yāni kānicit padavyañjanāni* *itaḥ suvarṇabhāsottamāt* *sūtrendrarājāt paribhraṣṭāni* *bhaviṣyanti vismaritāni ca /* *tāny ahaṃ sarvāṇi tasya* *dharmabhāṇakasya bhikṣoḥ* *suniruktapadavyañjanāny* *upasaṃhariṣyāmi /*	若彼法師 於此經中 文字句義 所有忘失 皆令憶持 能善開悟
If in this sutra there are missing words or the meaning of the phrases is wrong, I can make the *bhikṣu* expounding this Law regain [them] soon.	Whatever words or letters from this excellent *Suvarṇa-* *bhāsa*, king of sutras, may have been lost or forgotten, I will supply this monk who preaches the Law with all these well- spoken words and letters.	If, for that Master of the Law, in this text there are words and meanings of phrases[2] that have been forgotten or lost, I will see to it that he holds [them] all in memory and is able to understand [them] perfectly.

[2] Nobel (1958a, p.229) translates *wenzi juyi* 文字句義 as "die Bedeutung von Silben und Worten" ("the meaning of syllables and words").

DHARMAKṢEMA	SANSKRIT	YIJING
能與總持 令不忘失	*dhāraṇīṃ cānupradāsyāmi* *smṛtyasampramoṣaṇāya* /	復與陀羅尼 總持無礙
I can give him a 'complete-hold' (*dhāraṇī*) that will prevent loss of memory.	And I will bestow on him a *dhāraṇī* for the sake of preventing the loss of its memory,	Moreover, I will bestow on him a *dhāraṇī*- 'complete-hold'[3] without obstacle.
若有衆生 於百千佛所 種諸善根 是説法者 爲是等故 於閻浮提 廣宣流布 是妙經典	*yathā cāyaṃ* *suvarṇabhāsottamaḥ* *sūtrendrarājas* *teṣāṃ buddha-* *sahasrāvaruptakuśala-* *mūlānāṃ sattvānāṃ* *arthāya ciraṃ* *jambudvīpe pracaret* /	又此金光明最勝王經 爲彼有情 已於百千佛所 種諸善根 常受持者 於贍部洲 廣行流布
   If there be beings who have planted good roots in the place of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, for their sake, this expounder of the Law will spread widely and diffuse this wonderful sutra in Jambudvīpa,	so that this excellent *Suvarṇabhāsa*, king of sutras— for the welfare of those beings who have planted merit-roots under thousands of Buddhas— may long go forth in Jambudvīpa[4]	Further, this *Golden Light* *Supreme King Sutra*, for those sentients who in the place of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas have planted good roots and constantly receive and retain [this sutra], [that Master of the Law] will circulate widely and diffuse [it] in Jambudvīpa
令不斷絶	*na ca kṣipram antardhāpayet* /	不速隱沒
so as to make [it] uninterrupted (not become extinct),	(so that) it may not soon disappear,	[so that it may] not soon disappear,

[3] With *tuoluoni zongchi* 陀羅尼總持 Yijing has provided not only the phonetic transcription of *dhāraṇī* (陀羅尼), but also its literal translation 'complete-hold' (*zongchi* 總持).

[4] I have reversed the order of Emmerick's translation so as to make it match better with the corresponding Sanskrit.

DHARMAKṢEMA	SANSKRIT	YIJING
復令無量 無邊衆生 得聞是經 當令是等 悉得猛利 不可思議 大智慧	*anekāni ca sattvāni* *suvarṇabhāsottamaṃ* *sūtrendrarājaṃ śrutvācintya-* *tīkṣṇaprajñā bhaveyuḥ* /	復令無量有情 聞是經典 皆得不可思議捷利辯才 無盡大慧
and moreover, so as to make innumerable, boundless beings hear this sutra. I must make them all obtain acute (lit., wildly sharp), inconceivable great wisdom;	(so that) numerous beings, having heard this excellent *Suvarṇabhāsa*, king of sutras, may have inconceivable, acute wisdom,	and moreover, so as to make innumerable sentients hear this sutra and all obtain inconceiv- able, successful eloquence- talent[5] and inexhaustible great wisdom;
	acintyaṃ ca jñānaskandhaṃ *pratilabheyuḥ* / (so that) they may obtain an inconceivable heap of knowledge, *dṛṣṭadhārmikāṃ ca āyuḥ-* *sampattiṃ pratilabheyuḥ* / (so that) they may obtain old age and prosperity in this life,	 [See last line of this section for corresponding passage.]
聚不可稱 量福德之報	*jīvitānugrahaṃ ca aparimitaṃ ca* *puṇyaskandhaṃ pratigṛhṇīyuḥ* /	
gather an unnameable amount of lucky and meritorious retribution;	(so that) they may gain help for living and an unlimited heap of merit,	
善解無量 種種方便	[*nānopāyapravīṇāś ca bhaveyuḥ* /	
understand well the innumerable kinds of expedient means;	(so that) they may become skilled in various expedients,] [reconstituted from Tib. by Nobel]	

[5] Nobel (1958a, p.229) translates *biancai* 辯才 as 'Gestaltungskraft' ('creative power').

DHARMAKṢEMA	SANSKRIT	YIJING
善能辯暢 一切諸論	*sarvaśāstrakuśalāś ca* *bhaveyuḥ /*	善解衆論
be well capable of examining and penetrating all theories;	(so that) they may become learned in all the textbooks,	well comprehend all theories
善知世間 種種技術	*nānāśilpavidhisampattiṃ ca* *pratilabheyuḥ //*	及諸伎術
know well the various arts of the world;	(so that) they may obtain success in the performance of various arts.	and the various arts;
能出生死 得不退轉		能出生死
be able to come out of [the cycle of] birth-and-death and attain the irreversible [stage] (*avaivartika*);		be able to come out of [the cycle of] birth-and-death,
必定疾得 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提		速趣無上 正等菩提
certainly and quickly attain *anuttara samyak sambodhi* (highest perfect awakening).		quickly experience (lit., quickly go to) the highest perfect awakening;
		於現世中 增益壽命 資身之具 悉令圓滿
		in this world increase [their] lifespan, and have full plenitude of all the means to sustain the body.

2. BATH

SANSKRIT p.104, line 1 – p.108, line 2	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA pp.386c6–387b9	YIJING pp.434c8–436a2
mantrauṣadhisaṃyuktaṃ *snānakarma bhāṣiṣyāmi /*	我今復欲說其 呪藥洗浴法	世尊 我當爲彼持經法師 及餘有情 於此經典 樂聽聞者 說其呪藥 洗浴之法
I will explain the act of bathing attended by spells and medicaments.	I now, furthermore, want to expound the method of bathing with spells and medicinal herbs.	Venerable One, for the sake of him who retains the text, the Mas- ter of the Law, and for other sentients who listen joyfully to this text, I will expound the method of bathing with spells and medicinal herbs.
tasya dharmabhāṇakasya *bhikṣos teṣāṃ ca dharma-* *śravaṇikānāṃ sattvānāṃ* *arthāya /*	若有比丘 受持此經 復有衆生 深樂聽聞 是經典者 爲是人等	彼人所有
sarvagrahanakṣatra- *janmamaraṇapīḍā*	能除一切惡星災怪 除其疫氣疾病生死之苦	惡星災變 與初生時 星屬相違 疫病之苦
kalikalaha- *kaluṣaḍimbaḍāmara-* *duḥsvapna-* *vināyakapīḍāḥ* *sarvakākhordavetāḍāḥ*	惡口鬪諍 縣官口舌 夜臥惡夢 惡神障難 靨蠱呪咀	鬪諍戰陣 惡夢鬼神 蠱毒厭魅 呪術起屍 如是諸惡
praśamaṃ yāsyanti //	一切惡障 悉得除滅	爲障難者 悉令除滅

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
For the sake of the monk who preaches the Law	If there be a *bhikṣu* receiving and retaining this text	
and for the sake of those beings who listen to the Law,	and also beings who take great delight in listening to this text,	
	for these persons	These persons'
all the oppressions caused by planets, asterisms,	I will be able to remove all calamities [caused] by evil stars.	calamities [caused] by evil stars and, at the time of birth,
birth and death,	I will remove the hardships of disease, and of birth and death,	by mutually different constellations, the hardship of disease,
the oppressions caused by strife, quarrels, foul tumults and disorders,	of slander, quarrel, and dispute with sub-prefectural officials,	battle, war,
evil dreams,	bad dreams while lying at night,	bad dreams,
	obstacles and difficulties	
(or the god) Vināyaka, all the Kākhordas and Vetālas	[caused] by evil deities, repugnant worms, and spell-chewers.[7]	demonic deities,[6] worm-poison repugnant demons and spell-arts-revenants, such evils
	All bad obstacles	resulting from obstacles and difficulties,
will be completely removed.	will be completely removed and destroyed.	let [them] be completely removed and destroyed.
	是諸衆生 若有聽受是經法者 應當誦持此呪 呪藥作湯 洗浴其身	諸有智者
auṣadhayo mantrā yena snāpayanti ca paṇḍitāḥ //	是故我説 呪藥之法	應作如是洗浴之法

[6] Nobel (1958a, p.230) translates *guishen* 鬼神 as 'böse Geister' ('evil spirits'). See his note 2 on p.230.

[7] 厭蠱呪咀 in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta and 蠱毒厭魅呪術起屍 in Yijing refer to evil spirits known as Kākhordas (厭蠱; 蠱毒厭魅) and Vetāḍas (呪咀; 呪術起屍). Nobel (1958a, p.230) translates Yijing as "Giftwurm-*Kākhordas* und Zauber-*Vetāḍas*" ("poisonous-worms-*Kākhordas* and magic-*Vetāḍas*") and provides a lengthy discussion of these terms in note 3, pp.230–33. Kākhordas, as he explains, are demons who produce poisonous worms through curses, whereby jaundice arises, while Vetāḍas are corpses that stand up and utter curses. Emmerick renders the Sanskrit *veṭāda* by the more commonly known term Vetāla, which refers to ghosts, spirits, vampires, and demons, particularly those who occupy dead bodies.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
	These various beings, if they hear and receive this sutra Law, should recite and retain these spells, and, in the hot water made [with] spells and medicinal herbs, bathe their bodies.	Those who know
Medicaments and spells with which the learned bathe:	That is why I will expound the method [of bathing] with spells and medicinal herbs.	should do the method of bathing as follows (lit., like this):
	取好	當取香藥 三十二味 所謂
	Take	Thirty-two kinds of aromas and medicinal herbs are to be used (lit., taken), that is:
...	...	...[8]
	如是等藥	
etāni samabhāgāni pusyanakṣatreṇa pīṣayet /	各等分採之 用鬼星日 和合擣之 擣訖	皆等分以 布灑星日 一處擣篩 取其香末
imair mantrapadaiś cūrṇam śatadhā cābhimantrayet // tadyathā /	以此呪呪之 一百八遍 而説呪曰	當以此呪呪 一百八遍 呪曰
	Herbs such as these should each be gathered in equal portions,	All in equal portions,
—one should pound those, when Puṣya is the asterism, into equal portions	and on the day of the *yonggui* (Puṣya?) constellation	on the day of the Puṣya constellation,
	pounded together, and when the pounding is finished,	pound them and sieve them together. Taking this fragrant powder,
and one should consecrate the powder a hundred times	with this spell, spell it (the powder) 108 times.	you should spell [it] with the spell 108 times.

[8] For the lists of herbs, see the comparative chart in Appendix B.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
with the following spell, so: ...	I pronounce the spell that says: ...	The spell says: ...[9]
		若樂如法洗浴時
gomayena maṇḍalaṃ kṛtvā	以牛糞塗地 縱廣七肘 以爲道場	應作壇場 方八肘
		可於寂靜安隱處 念所求事不離心 應塗牛糞作其壇
muktapuṣpāṇi sthāpayet /	以華散著道場中 遍覆其地 懸繪幡蓋	於上普散諸花彩
svarṇabhāṇḍa rūpyabhāṇḍe *madhurasaṃ ca sthāpayet //*	用金椀銀椀 盛石蜜漿葡萄漿蜜漿乳汁 置於道場外	當以淨潔金銀器 盛滿美味并乳蜜
		When delighting in the bath as prescribed by the rules,
Having made a magic circle with cow-dung,	Smear the earth with cow-dung the length and width of seven elbows[10] to make the 'place of the way.'[11]	you should construct the altar place with eight elbows on [all] sides.
		You may, in a quiet, secluded place, remember (lit., think about) that which you want, without separating from [your] heart.

[9] In this appendix all spells are omitted.

[10] The measure for *zhou* 肘, according to Morohashi (1955–60, vol.9, p.253b), is either two 'palms' (*chi* 尺) or one palm and five inches (*cun* 寸). As in the corresponding Yijing, this is a square, rather than a 'circle' (*maṇḍala*).

[11] The term *daochang* 道場 'place of the way,' corresponding here to *maṇḍala*, is generally used to render the Sanskrit *bodhimaṇḍa* (see p.165, note 7 above), a place/platform for attaining awakening through practice, including ritual practice. The *daochang* in this passage, therefore, refers to the place or space within which the bathing ritual taught by the goddess is to be performed. Since, however, the actual sense of the term *daochang* is much broader in its implications, I have chosen to translate it literally, as the Chinese rendered it. Yijing, in his version of the bathing ritual, does not use the word *daochang*, but rather *tanchang* 壇場 'altar place,' which is more specifically ritual. According to Nakamura (1981, p.942d), *tanchang* is equivalent to *tanjie* 壇戒 'ordination platform,' but, as we see in Yijing's text, the use of the term *tanchang* was not limited to the ordination platform.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
		Smear cow-dung to make this altar,
one should strew loose flowers	Scatter flowers inside the 'place of the way,' everywhere covering the ground, and hang pictures, banners, and canopies.[12]	[and] scatter everywhere over it floral adornments.
and one should place honey in a gold vessel and in a silver vessel.	Use a gold and a silver bowl and fill [them] to the full with honey drink, wild grape drink, and honey juice and milk, and place [them] outside the 'place of the way.'	You ought to fill a purified gold and silver vessel to the full with delicious tastes and milk with honey.
varmitāni ca puruṣāṇi *catvāri tatra sthāpayet /*	四角頭各 置一人 身帶鍪鉀 手持戎仗 隱身而立	於彼壇場四門所 四人守護法如常
kanyāḥ subhūṣitā nyastāś	復須四童女子 各著淨衣	令四童子好嚴身
catvāro ghaṭadhāriṇīḥ //	奉持華瓶 亦於道場 四角而立	各於一角持瓶水
One should put there four men clad in armour	In each of the four corners place a man, the body wearing helmet and armour, the hands holding weapons, the body standing hidden.	At the four gates of the altar place [should stand] four guardians of the Law, as is usual.
and place four beautifully-adorned maidens bearing pots.	Moreover, it is necessary that four maidens wearing pure clothing and carrying a flower vase stand in the four corners of the 'place of the way.'	Let four beautifully-adorned boys, [one] in each corner, hold vase water.

[12] Nobel (1958a, p.237, note 3) understands Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's *hui fan gai* 繪幡蓋 to mean silken banners and parasols ("seidene Banner [繪幡] und Sonnenshirme [蓋]").

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
guggulum dhūpayen nityam	燒膠香供 養不得斷絶 復作五色神幡 四角安寶幢	於此常燒安息香
pañcatūryāṇi yojayet / chatradhvajapatākaiś ca tām devīṃ samalaṃkṛtām //	五種音聲伎樂	五音之樂聲不絶 幡蓋莊嚴懸繒綵 安在壇場之四邊
One must continually scatter incense of Indian bdellium,	The offering of burning sweetgum incense must not be interrupted. Furthermore, make five-coloured sacred banners and in the four corners place precious standards.[14]	Here continuously burn Parthian incense.[13]
play the five kinds of musical instruments,[15]	Music in the five kinds of tonalities should be played.	The musical sounds of the five tonalities are not to be interrupted.
and thoroughly adorn the goddess with umbrellas, flags, and banners.		Adornments of banners, parasols, and hanging picture designs,[16] place [these] at the four corners of the altar place.
ādarśanapadādyaś ca śaraśaktīr niyojayet /		復於場内置明鏡 利刀兼箭各四枚
	以新淨器	於壇中心埋大盆 應以漏版安其上
	盛其香湯 置道場中於	用前香末以和湯 亦復安在於壇内 既作如斯布置已
sīmābandham tataḥ kuryāt paścāt kāryaṃ samārabhet /	先結界 然後洗浴	然後誦呪結其壇

[13] On *anxixiang* 安息香, the incense of the Parthians or Arsacides (Anxi 安息), see Appendix B, p.312 (and note 13). Cf. Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's *jiaoxiang* 膠香 with *baijiaoxiang* 白膠香, Formosa sweetgum, in their (as well as Yijing's) herb list (Appendix B, p.311 below).

[14] Nobel (1951, p.138) says the *baochuang* 寶幢 may be jewelled curtains ('Kleinodien-Vorhänge').

[15] Nobel (1958a, p.238, note 2) says the *pañcatūryāṇi* are five cymbals ('fünf Zymbeln'). According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* (Sadie 1984, vol.3, p.8), however, the *pañcatūrya nāda*, a term widely used in ancient and medieval Ceylon (as early as the first century B.C.E.), refers to an instrumental ensemble for courtly music, and especially for Buddhist ritual. This 'fivefold music' derives from the Sinhalese classification of instruments. See also the ceremonial *pañcavādya* 'five instruments' of Kerala, introduced briefly in Sadie 1984, vol.3, p.9.

[16] Nobel (1951, p.138; 1958a, p.238 and note 3) interprets *huicai* 繒綵 as silken tassels ('seidene Quasten'), based on the Tibetan.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
anena mantrapadakramena sīmābandhaṃ samārabhet // syād yathedam /	說此結界呪曰	結界呪曰
At intervals one must place mirrors, arrows, and spears.		Moreover, within the [altar] place, put clear mirrors, sharp swords, and arrows, four of each.
	Take a newly purified vessel,	In the center of the altar, bury a large platter, and you should place a leaking plank[17] over it.
	fill it with these fragrances and hot water[19] and place it in the center of the 'place of the way.'	To the previously prepared fragrant powder,[18] mix hot water, and place that also on the altar. Once having completed the making of arrangements like these,
Then one must make one's boundary-line.	First tie the boundaries,[20]	after [that], recite a spell to bind that altar.
Next, one must begin what has to be done.	and then bathe.	
One must begin (to make) one's boundary-line in the course of uttering this spell, so:	I pronounce the spell for tying the boundaries:	The spell for tying the boundaries says:
...	...	...
		如是結界已 方入於壇内
	以呪呪水 二十一遍	呪水三七遍
	散著四方 復說呪 湯呪身呪	散灑於四方 次可呪香湯

[17] Nobel (1951, p.138; 1958a, p.239 and note 3) interprets *louban* 漏版 as a plank for climbing ('Bohle zum Besteigen'), based on the Tibetan.

[18] *Xiangmo* 香末 is attested only in Luo Zhufeng 1986–94, vol.12, p.425b.

[19] *Xiangtang* 香湯 could also mean 'the fragrant hot water,' referring presumably to the water prepared with the different herbs.

[20] *Jiejie* 結界 'tie the boundaries' is a faithful translation of *sīmābandha* 'boundaries-tying' and refers to the establishment of the ritual space by delimiting and firmly fixing its boundaries, binding it through mantras.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
bhagavataḥ pṛṣṭhataḥ *snātvā anena* *mantrajāpena* *snānaśāntiṃ yojayet /* *tadyathā /*	先呪身一百八遍 復呪湯一百八遍 以此湯 洗浴其身	滿一百八遍 四邊安幔障 然後洗浴身 呪水呪湯呪曰
After one has bathed behind [an image of] the Lord, one should assure peace for the bathing by uttering the following spell, so: ...	With a spell, spell the water twenty-one times, scattering [it] in the four directions. Moreover, pronounce the spells, the hot water spell and the body spell. First spell the body 108 times, and also spell the hot water 108 times. With this hot water, bathe the body. ...	Like this, having tied the boundaries, enter into the altar and spell the water three-[times]-seven (3 x 7) times, sprinkling in the four directions. Then you can spell the fragrant hot water fully 108 times. Place an obstructing curtain on the four sides, and then bathe [your] body. The spell for spelling the water and for spelling the hot water says: ...
	誦呪洗浴訖	若洗浴訖 其洗浴湯 及壇場中 供養飲食 棄河池內 餘皆收攝 如是浴已 方著淨衣 既出壇場 入淨室內
	After reciting the spell and bathing,	After the bath, that bath water, together with the drink

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
		and food offered in the altar place, throw into a river or a pond, and gather all that remains. Like this having completed the bath, don a purified garb and leave the altar place, entering a purified room.
	行者爲其是人 發弘誓願	呪師教其發弘誓願 永斷衆惡 常修諸善 於諸有情 興大悲心 以是因緣 當獲無量隨心福報
	the practitioner, for that or this person, makes the great vow.	The master of spells teaches the making of the great vow: Forever cut all evil and always cultivate what is good. In all sentients, rouse the heart of great compassion. Through primal and secondary causes, you will obtain countless meritorious retributions cherished in [your] heart.
		復說頌曰 若有病苦諸衆生 種種方藥治不差 若依如是洗浴法 并復讀誦斯經典 常於日夜念不散 專想慇懃生信心 所有患苦盡消除 解脫貧窮足財寶

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
		Moreover, she [the goddess] pronounced a praise: If illness torments beings, and the various medicinal treatments are ineffective, if you resort to this method of bathing, and also to recitation of this text, always [remaining], throughout the day and the night, [with] undivided mind, in conducive (lit., correct), exclusive thought, producing a heart [full of] faith, the various distresses will disappear completely, you will be delivered from dire misery, and there will be plenitude of treasures.
nakṣatrāyuḥ pālayantu *caturdiśāsu [ye sthitā] /* *nakṣatrajanmapīḍā vā* *rāśikarmabhayāvaham /* *dhātusaṃkṣobhasambhūtā* *śāmyantu bhaya dāruṇā //*	願四方神星 覆護身命 常令休吉 無諸障難 惡星災怪 悉無所畏 四大安吉 無諸疾患 一切怖畏 悉得除愈 復說呪 身呪願呪	四方星辰及日月 威神擁護得延年 吉祥安隱福德增 災變厄難皆除遣 次誦護身呪三七遍 呪曰
May the asterisms in the four directions protect one's life.	Beseech the divine constellations of the four directions to protect the body	The powerful deities[21] of the constellations of the four directions, together with [those of] the sun and the moon, will protect you, and you will attain prolonged years.

[21] Nobel (1958a, p.241) translates *wei shen* 威神 as 'mit ihrem Machtglanz' ('with their power-brilliance').

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
  May the oppressions caused by asterisms or birth be removed, the onset of fears caused by heaps of acts, cruel fears produced by the confusion of the elements.	and always to see to it that you should be fortunate and unhindered by obstacles [so that] calamities [caused] by evil stars [need] not be feared, and that the four great [elements in the body] be in good condition and free from diseases, [so that] all fears be eliminated completely. Moreover, I pronounce, so as to spell, the body spell and the beseeching spell:	Good fortune, well-being (peace), and good merit will increase, and all calamities and perils will be removed. Next, recite three-[times]-seven (3 x 7) times the spell for the protection of the body. The spell says:
...	...	...
etena snānakarmaṇā	於是大辯天神 白佛言	爾時大辯才天女 說洗浴法壇場呪已 前禮佛足白佛言
At the act of bathing,	At this [point], the Great Eloquence Deity said to the Buddha:	At that time, the great Eloquence Talent Goddess, having completed the pronouncing of the spells for the rite of bathing and for the altar place, [came] forward, prostrated at the feet of the Buddha, and said to the Buddha:
tasya dharmabhāṇakasya *bhikṣor arthāya teṣāṃ ca* *dharmaśravaṇikānāṃ teṣāṃ* *lekhakānām arthāya svayam*	世尊 若有比丘比丘尼 優婆塞優婆夷 受持讀誦 書寫流通 如法行者 若城邑聚落 曠野露地 塔寺僧房 俗人住處	世尊 若有苾芻苾芻尼 鄔波索迦鄔波斯迦 受持讀誦 書寫流布是妙經王 如說行者 若在城邑聚落 曠野山林 僧尼住處

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
for the sake of the monk who preaches the Law, for the sake of those who listen to the Law and of those who write it down,	Venerable One, if there be *bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, *upāsaka*, and *upāsikā*, who receive and retain, read and recite, write out and diffuse [this sutra], and practise such a [bathing] ritual, whether they live in cities or villages, on broad plains or open land, in monk residences of monasteries, in the homes of lay people,	Venerable One, if there be *bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, *upāsaka*, and *upāsikā*, who receive and retain, read and recite, write out and diffuse this wonderful sutra king, and who practise [the bath] as I have expounded, whether they live in cities or villages, on broad plains or in mountains and groves,[22] in the dwellings of monks and nuns,
evāhaṃ tatra gamiṣyāmi / *sarvadevagaṇena sārdhaṃ* *tatra ca grāme vā nagare vā* *nigame vā vihāre vā sarva-* *rogapraśamanaṃ kariṣyāmi /*	我爲是諸人等 將諸眷屬 作天伎樂 来詣道場 除一切病	我爲是人 將諸眷屬 作天伎樂 来詣其所 而爲擁護 除諸病苦
I myself go there. Together with the whole multitude of gods, I will cause the removal of every disease in that village, city, district, or dwelling.	I, for these persons, with my various retinues producing celestial music, will come and visit the 'place of the way' and remove all illnesses,	I, for these persons, with my various retinues producing celestial music, will come and visit their place and protect [them], and I will remove the hard- ship of various illnesses.
sarvagrahakalikalaha- *nakṣatrajanmapīḍā vā* *duḥsvapna-* *vināyakapīḍāḥ* *sarvakākhordavetāḍān* *praśamayiṣyāmi /*	一切惡星災怪 除其一切疫病生死之苦 除一切惡口鬪諍 縣官口舌 除一切夜臥惡夢 除一切惡神障難 除一切蠱蠱呪咀 除一切惡障	流星變怪 疫疾 鬪諍 王法所拘 惡夢 惡神爲障礙者 蠱道厭術 悉皆除殄

[22] Nobel (1958a, p.241) translates 曠野山林 as "in einer Wildnis, auf Bergen" ("in a wilderness, on mountains").

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
I will remove all oppressions caused by planets, quarrels, strife, asterisms, and birth, oppressions caused by evil dreams or [the god] Vināyaka, all Kākhordas and Vetālas,	all calamities [caused] by evil stars. I will remove all hardships of disease and of the cycle of rebirths. I will remove all slander, quarrel, and dispute with sub-prefectural officials. I will remove all bad dreams while lying down at night. I will remove all obstacles and difficulties [caused] by evil deities. I will remove all repugnant worms and spell-chewers. I will remove all bad obstacles.	Meteors, bad omens, disease, quarrels, detention due to the king's law, bad dreams, obstacles caused by evil deities, worm-way and repugnant art,[23] I will remove [them] all completely.
yathā teṣāṃ sūtrendra- *dhārakāṇāṃ bhikṣu-* *bhikṣuṇyupāsakopāsikānāṃ* *jīvitānugraho bhavet /*	若有比丘比丘尼 優婆塞優婆夷 受持讀誦此經	饒益是等 持經之人 苾芻等衆 及諸聽者
so that there may be help for living for those monks, nuns, laymen or laywomen who hold the chief of sūtras,	If there be *bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, *upāsaka*, and *upāsikā*, who receive and retain, read and recite this text,	[For] the benefit of the people who retain the text, etc., *bhikṣu*, etc., and all the auditors,
saṃsāranirvāṇaṃ ca *pratilabheyuḥ /*	速度煩惱	皆令速渡 生死大海
(that) they may obtain escape from the cycle of existence	they will quickly cross over passions,	I let [them] all quickly cross over the great ocean of birth-and-death (*saṃsāra*),
avaivartikāś ca bhaveyur *anuttarāyāṃ samyak-* *sambodhau /*	入阿毘跋致地	不退菩提

[23] Cf. pp.283–84 above. On the Kākhordas and Vetāḍas, see note 7 on p.284.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
and may become non-returners in supreme and perfect enlightenment,	enter the land of non-returning,	and [attain] awakening from which one does not regress.
kṣipraṃ cānuttarāyāṃ samyaksambodhau abhimukhāḥ sambudheyuḥ // (that) they may quickly awaken before supreme and perfect enlightenment.	向阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 以此功徳 速成阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 and face *anuttara samyak sambodhi* (the highest perfect awakening). With this merit, they will quickly attain *anuttara samyak sambodhi*.	
atha khalu bhagavān sarasvatyai devyai sādhukāram adāt / Then indeed the Lord offered congratulations to the goddess Sarasvatī:	爾時世尊讃 大辯天神言 Then the Venerable One, praising the Great Eloquence Deity, said:	爾時世尊 聞是説已 讃辯才天女言 Then the Venerable One, having heard this exposition, praising the Eloquence Talent Goddess, said:
sādhu sādhu sarasvati mahādevi / Bravo! bravo! great goddess Sarasvatī!	善哉善哉 大辯天神 Well [done], well [done], Great Eloquence Deity.	善哉善哉 天女 Well [done], well [done], goddess.
bahujanahitāya tvaṃ pratipannā bahujana-sukhāya yat tvayedṛśāni mantrauṣadhisamyuktāni padāni bhāṣitāni //	能爲一切衆生 思惟善事 能令一切衆生 施其無畏 爲諸衆生 説此呪藥功 能利益一切衆生	汝能安樂 利益無量 無邊有情 説此神呪 及以香水 壇場法式 果報難思 汝當擁護 最勝經王 勿令隱沒 常得流通

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
You have come for the welfare of many men, for the blessing of many men, since you have spoken such words concerning spells and medicaments.	You have been able, for the sake of all beings, to consider what is good. You have been able to allow that all beings attain that fearlessness. For the sake of beings, you have expounded the effect of these spells and medicinal herbs. For the benefit of all beings, it was well.	You have been able to [make] rejoice and benefit countless, limitless sentients. You have expounded these sacred spells, also with the rules for the fragrant water [bath] and the altar place, and the result [of the bathing ritual, which is] difficult to conceive. You should protect the supreme sutra king (i.e., the *Sutra of Golden Light*), not permit that [it] disappear, and always obtain that [it] be propagated.
sā ca sarasvatī devī bhagavataḥ padābhi-vandanaṃ kṛtvā ekānte niṣaṇṇā // And the goddess Sarasvatī did worship at the Lord's feet and sat down on one side.	於是大辯天神 禮佛三拜 還復故座 At this [point], the Great Deity of Eloquence worshipped the Buddha three times and returned to her old seat.	爾時大辯才天女 禮佛足已 還復本座 Then the great Eloquence Talent Goddess prostrated at the feet of the Buddha and returned to her original seat.

3. KAUṆḌINYA'S PRAISES

3.1 *Shorter Praise*

SANSKRIT p.108, lines 3–10	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA p.387b10–17	YIJING p.436a3–10
Introduction		
atha khalv ācārya- *vyākaraṇaḥ kauṇḍinyo* *brāhmaṇas* *tāṃ sarasvatīṃ devīm* *āvāhayati sma //*	爾時婆羅門憍陳如 以呪力故 當請大辯天神	爾時法師授記 憍陳如婆羅門 承佛威力 於大衆前 讚請辯才天女曰
Then indeed the teacher and expounder[24] Kauṇḍinya, the Brahman,	At this time Brahman Kauṇḍinya,[25]	At this time, the Master of the Law, Brahman Kauṇḍinya of the prophecy,[26]
	because of the power of spells,	receiving the Buddha's power,[27] before the great assembly,
called to the goddess Sarasvatī:	called to the Great Eloquence Deity:	praising and calling to the Eloquence Talent Goddess, said:
Stanza One		
sarasvatī mahādevī *pūjanīyā mahātapā /* *vikhyātā sarvalokeṣu* *varadātā mahāguṇā //*	亦當恭敬 大辯天神 一切世間 名悉遍到	聰明勇進辯才天 人天供養悉應受 名聞世間遍充滿 能與一切衆生願

[24] The term *vyākaraṇa* also means prophecy. Yijing translates it as *shouji* 授記 'to give (授) signs (記).' In Chinese Buddhist literature, these characters can refer either to one of the twelve divisions of sutras or to the prophecy given by the Buddha that a certain person shall attain awakening (Oda 1917, p.981c; Nakamura 1981, p.641b–c). In this context, *shouji* can only signify the latter of the two, and hence Nobel (1958a, p.242) translates it back into Sanskrit as *vyākaraṇa-prāpta* ['prophecy-received'].

[25] The Chinese Jiaochenru 憍陳如 seems to be a transcription of Kauṇḍinya.

[26] On *shouji* see note 24 above.

[27] Nobel (1958a, p.242) understands *weili* 威力 to mean blessing ('Segens').

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
Sarasvatī, the great goddess, is worthy of worship, possesses great asceticism,	Further, I pay reverence to the Great Eloquence Deity.	Wise[28] and of brave energy,[29] the Eloquence Talent Deity receives the worship of humans and gods.
famous in all worlds,	Throughout the worlds, her name reaches completely and everywhere.	Her name is heard throughout the worlds and fills everywhere.
a giver of boons, of great virtues.		She is able to meet the wishes of all beings.
Stanza Two		
śikhare samāśritā kāntā	恒在山中 天龍鬼神 一切悉敬	依高山頂勝住處
darbhacīvaravāsitā / *darbhavastraṃ dhārayantī* *ekapādena tiṣṭhati //*	常披草衣 一脚而立	葺茅爲室在中居 恒結軟草以爲衣 在處常翹於一足
Dwelling on a peak, beautiful,	Always dwelling in a mountain, gods, dragons, demons, and deities all revere [her].	Her superior dwelling is atop a high mountain,
clad in a grass garment,	Always wearing robes of grass,	and a grass thatched roof is the house where she lives.
wearing grass clothing,		Always tying pliable grass to make [her] clothes,
she stands on one foot.	she stands on one foot.	she continuously stands in her place on one foot.

[28] The two characters *zongming* 聰明 may be taken together in the sense of 'wise,' 'intelligent,' or 'knowledgeable,' but each of the characters also has an independent meaning: *zong* 聰 is 'intelligence,' and *ming* 明 is 'knowledge.' Cf. *zongming* on p.437a8 (*Harivaṃśa* hymn in Chinese translation) of this same chapter of the sutra in Yijing's rendition, which I translate (see Ludvik 2006, pp.19, 22) separately, *zong* as 'intelligence' and *ming* as 'knowledge,' corresponding to the Sanskrit *matiḥ* and *vidyā*, respectively. Nobel (1958a, p.242) renders *zongming* here as 'klaren Einsicht' ('clear insight'), and at Yijing's p.437a8 as 'schnelle Auffassungsgabe' ('quick understanding') [Nobel 1958a, p.250].

[29] For *yongjin* 勇進 as an abbreviation of *yongmeng jingjin* 勇猛精進, see p.185 above. Nobel (1958a, p.242) translates *yongjin* 勇進 as 'Energie' ('energy').

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
Stanza Three		
sarvadevāḥ samāgamya *tām ūcur vacanaṃ tv idam /* *jihvāṃ vimuñca sattvānāṃ* *bhāṣantu vacanaṃ śubham //*	一切諸天 悉来到彼 欲請天神 願施一切 衆生智慧 言語辯了 能以善言	諸天大衆皆来集 咸同一心申讚請 惟願智慧辯才天 以妙言詞施一切
All the gods assembled and spoke these words to her: Let loose the tongue of beings! They should speak a fine speech.[30]	All the gods came to her together and requested the deity: We pray you grant all beings wisdom to speak and argue, and ability with fine speech.[31]	The great assembly of the gods all came and gathered, whole-heartedly uttered a eulogy [to her] and requested: May wise Eloquence Talent Deity, with [her] wonderful words, grant everything.

[30] The translation of the gods' request is my own. Emmerick renders it as: "Let loose your tongue. Speak to beings a fine speech" (1996, pp.47–48).

[31] This passage may also be interpreted as: "We pray [to you], who grant all beings wisdom, to speak and argue, [you] who are skilled in fine speech."

3.2 *Longer Praise*

SANSKRIT p.110, line 1 – p.112, line 4	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA pp.387c10–388a7	YIJING p.437b21–c12
Introduction		
athācāryavyākaraṇaḥ *kauṇḍinyo brāhmaṇaḥ* *sarasvatīṃ mahādevīm* *imābhir gāthābhir* *abhyaṣṭāvīt //*	爾時憍陳如婆羅門 以偈讃大辯天神	爾時婆羅門 復以呪讃天女曰
Then the teacher and expounder Kauṇḍinya, the Brahman, praised Sarasvatī, the great goddess, in these verses (*gāthā*):	At this time Brahman Kauṇḍinya, with verses (*gāthā*) praised the Great Eloquence Deity:	At this time, the Brahman, further, with spells[32] praising the goddess, said:
Stanza One		
śṛṇvantu me bhūtagaṇā *hi sarve* *stoṣyāmi devīṃ* *pravarottamacāruvaktrām /* *yā mātṛgrāme* *pravarottamāgradevī* *sadevagandharva-* *surendraloke //*	一切諸鬼神 今當至心聽 我今欲讃嘆 大聖辯天神 一切諸女中 辯天最爲尊 諸天修羅等 乾闥及夜叉 世間諸聖中 一切最爲尊	敬禮敬禮世間尊 於諸母中最爲勝 三種世間咸供養 面貌容儀人樂觀
May all the hordes of Bhūtas hear me. I will praise the goddess, whose face is supremely, extremely beautiful,	All demons and deities should now listen with all [their] hearts [as] I now wish to praise the greatly holy Eloquence Deity.	Salutations, salutations to the venerable one of the world.

[32] Nobel (1958a, p.256) understands *zhou* 呪 to be singular 'spell.'

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
who among women	Amongst all women, the Eloquence Deity is the most venerable.	Amongst mothers, she is the most superior.
in the world of the gods, Gandharvas, and lords of gods,[33] is the supreme, chief, excellent goddess.	Amongst the gods, Asuras, etc., the Gandharvas and Yakṣas, the saints of the world, she is the most venerable.	The three worlds all worship [her]. People behold her countenance and demeanour with delight.[34]
Stanza Two		
nānāvicitraguṇa- *saṃcitālaṃkārāṅgā* *sarasvatī nāma viśālanetrī /* *puṇyojjvalā vimalajñāna-* *guṇair vikīrṇā* *nānāvicitraratnopama-* *darśanīyā //*	種種諸功德 以用莊嚴身 眼如優波羅 智慧功德相 譬如七寶珠 世間甚難見	種種妙德以嚴身 目如脩廣青蓮葉 福智光明名稱滿 譬如無價末尼珠
With limbs full of adorn- ments of various virtues, Sarasvatī by name is broad-eyed, brilliant in merit, full of the virtues of pure knowledge, and beautiful like a variety of jewels.	Various kinds of virtues adorn her body. Her eyes are like *utpala* (blue lotuses). The appearance of her knowledge and virtue is like the seven jewels difficult to see in this world.	Her body is adorned with various wonderful virtues. Her eyes are like long and wide blue lotus petals. She is full of blessed knowledge, brilliance, and fame, like a priceless *maṇi* jewel.
Stanza Three		
stosyāmi tāṃ *pravaravākyaguṇair* *viśiṣṭaiḥ* *siddhikarāya* *pravarottamāya /*	我今欲讚嘆 甚深最勝語 決定施與一切衆 最勝最高無過者	我今讚歎最勝者 悉能成辦所求心

[33] Emmerick (1996, p.48) presumably read the compound *sadevagandharvasurendraloke* with a long *a* in the middle (*sadevagandharvāsurendraloke*), resulting in the translation "in the worlds of gods, Gandharvas, and lords of Asuras [*asurendra*]," which I have modified here to "... and lords of gods [*surendra*]."

[34] In Yijing, the corresponding passage for the first half of this stanza appears on p.437a3–5. See p.191 above.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
praśastatantrāya *guṇākarāya* *vimalottamāya* *kamalojjvalāya //*	相好端嚴潤衆生 形貌清淨如蓮華	眞實功德妙吉祥 譬如蓮花極清淨
I will praise her by reason of her distinguished virtues of excellent speech,	I now wish to praise the one whose speech is very profound and supreme,	I now praise the supreme one.
because she causes excellent, supreme success,	who determines to gratify all beings, who is the supreme, the most high, the unsurpassed.	She can fulfill all that is sought after by the heart.
because of her famous teaching,	Her marks and minor marks[35] are grave and solemn, benefiting sentient beings.	
because she is a mine of virtues, because she is pure and supreme,		The wonderful auspicious- ness[36] of her genuine virtue
because she is brilliant as a lotus.	Her countenance is pure like a lotus flower.	is like a lotus flower, utterly pure.
Stanza Four		
sulocanāya nayanottamāya *śubhāśrayāya* *śubhadarśanāya /* *guṇair acintyaiḥ* *samalaṃkṛtāya* *candropamāya* *vimalaprabhāya //*	眼目修禓勝一切 身體端正視無厭 種種莊嚴諸相好 光明清淨如月光	 身色端嚴皆樂見 衆相希有不思議
Because her eyes are fair and excellent, because her residence is beautiful,	She is unmatched in the slenderness and length of her eyes.	

[35] On the *xianghao* 相好, see p.194 and note 28 on the same page.

[36] Nobel (1958a, p.256) understands *jixiang* 吉祥 to mean splendour ('Pracht').

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
because her appearance is beautiful,	Her body is proper, and we look at it insatiably.	Her bodily aspect[37] is proper and majestic,[38] and all delight in beholding it.
because she is thoroughly adorned with inconceivable virtues,	[Its] various adornments are the marks and the minor marks.[40]	Her marks are rare[39] and inconceivable.
because she resembles the moon, because her splendour is pure.	Her splendour is pure like the moonlight.	

Stanza Five

jñānākarāya *smṛti-m-agratāya*[41] *siṃhottamāya* *naravāhanāya /*	智慧悉能遍一切 強記不妄能總持 乘師子上現人形	能放無垢智光明 於諸念中爲最勝 猶如師子獸中上
aṣṭābhir bāhubhir *alaṃkṛtāya*	體有八臂莊嚴身	常以八臂自莊嚴 各持弓箭刀矟斧 長杵鐵輪并羂索
pūrṇaśaśāṅkopama- *darśanāya //*	衆生見者如滿月	端正樂見如滿月
Because she is a mine of knowledge, because of the superiority	Her wisdom is all-pervading. Her memory is not false	She emits the stainless light of wisdom, and she excels in all

[37] Nobel (1958a, p.256) understands *shense* 身色 as the colour of the body ('Körpers Farbe'). According to Nakamura (1981, p.772a), *shense* indicates the appearance or bodily aspect (*sugata*). Luo Zhufeng (1986–94, vol.10, pp.701b–02a) defines it as both the body and [its] colour, and, like Oda (1917, p.872b), cites a passage from the preface to Kumārajīva's Chinese rendering of the *Lotus Sutra*: 身色如金山 (T. vol.9, no.262, p.4c13), variously translated as "their [the buddhas'] bodies colored like a gold mountain" (Hurvitz 1976, p.17) and "le corps comme une montagne d'or" ["the body like a mountain of gold"] (Robert 1997, p.62). While Hurvitz separates the characters *shense*, taking *shen* 身 as the subject and *se* 色 as the verb, Robert understands them as a compound meaning the body. In our case, considering the structure of the phrase and both the Sanskrit and the previous Chinese version, it is clear that here *shense* means the body or bodily aspect.

[38] The characters *duanyan* 端嚴 also appear immediately following the passage from the preface to Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra* (T. vol.9, no.262, p.4c13) cited in note 37 above: 身色如金山端嚴甚微妙 "their bodies colored like a gold mountain, erect, majestic, and very fine" (Hurvitz 1976, p.17; cf. Robert 1997, p.62 "le corps comme une montagne d'or, majestueux, sublimes ô combien" ["the body like a mountain of gold, majestic, sublime, oh how"]). Nobel (1958a, p.256) understands *duanyan* to mean radiant ('ist strahlend').

[39] Nobel (1958a, p.256) understands *xi* 希 to mean wonderful ('wunderbar').

[40] On *xianghao* 相好 see p.194 and note 28 on the same page.

[41] As Nobel notes in his edition of the Sanskrit (p.111, note 7), the '*m*' of *smṛti-m-agratāya* is a euphonic insertion.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
of her memory,[42]	and can hold,[43] [so] she can remember everything.	memory/remembering.
because she is the best of lionesses,	Superior[44] to the best of lionesses,	Indeed she is superior like the lion among beasts,
because she is a vehicle for men,	she manifests a human form.	
because she is adorned with eight arms,	As to her physique, she has a body adorned with eight arms.	always self-adorned with eight arms, each holding bow, arrow, sword, long-handled spear, axe, long vajra,[45] iron wheel, and lasso.
because her appearance is like that of the full moon.	Beings see her as the full moon.	Proper,[46] she is beheld with joy like the full moon.

Stanza Six

manojñavākyāya *mṛdusvarāya*	語言辯了聲微妙	言詞無滯出和音
gambhīraprajñāya *samanvitāya /*	智慧甚深難思議 以此智慧恒圓滿	
kāryāgrasādhanakarāya *susattvatāya* *devāsurendrair api* *pūjitāya /*	能施衆生一切願 於一切衆最爲尊 帝釋修羅諸天等 乾闥婆等及夜叉	若有衆生心願求 善事隨念令圓滿 帝釋諸天咸供養
sarvasurāsuragaṇālaya- *varṇitāya*	一切大衆恒讚嘆	皆共稱讚可歸依
bhūtagaṇālaya sadā *saṃpūjitāya //* *svāhā //*		衆德能生不思議 一切時中起恭敬 莎訶[47]

[42] Emmerick translates *smṛti* as 'mindfulness,' which in this context is certainly inaccurate. I have therefore changed it to 'memory.'

[43] On *zongchi* 總持 as *dhāraṇī*, see p.159 above.

[44] On *cheng* 乘 in the sense of 'superior,' see p.198 and note 41 on the same page.

[45] On *chu* 杵 as an abbreviation of *jingangchu* 金剛杵, a vajra, see Nakamura 1981, p.687a. Nobel (1958a, p.257) understands *changchu* 長杵 to be a long club ('lange Keule').

[46] Nobel (1958a, p.257 and note 7) understands *duanzheng* 端正 to mean lovely one ('Liebliche') based on the Tibetan.

[47] An interlinear note regarding recitation procedure follows.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
Because of her heartening speech, because of her soft voice,	Her speech is clear, her voice is delicate, and	Her words do not stagnate,[48] and they emit harmonious sounds.
because she is endowed with profound wisdom,	her wisdom is very profound and difficult to conceive. With this wisdom always full,	
because she causes the accomplishment of the best deeds,	she has the ability to bestow on beings all [their] wishes.	If there are beings whose hearts seek after acting excellently,[49] in accordance with [their] thoughts, she allows the fulfillment [thereof].
because she is an excellent being, because she is honoured by the lords of gods and Asuras, because she is praised in all the dwellings of a multitude of gods and Asuras, because she is continually worshipped in the abode of a multitude of Bhūtas.	Amongst all beings, she is the most venerable; Dishi (Śakra/Indra), the Asuras, Devas, etc., Gandharvas, etc., Yakṣas; all the great assemblies continuously praise [her].	Dishi (Śakra) and the gods all worship [her]. All together they praise [her] well and turn [to her] for refuge. The virtues she is able to generate are inconceivable. Throughout all times she arouses veneration.
Hail! (*svāhā*)		*Svāhā*.

Stanza Seven

ahaṃ devīm imāṃ *namasyāmi* *sā me prayacchatu* *guṇaughaṃ viśiṣṭam /*	我某甲等當恭敬 供養清淨慇重心	
siddhiṃ mama pradadātu *sarvakārye*	以此願故皆吉祥	
nityaṃ ca rakṣatu māṃ *śatrumadhye //*	於怖畏處恒防護	

[48] Nobel (1958a, p.257) translates 言詞無滯 as "Ihre Ausdruckweise hat keine Hemmungen" ("her way of expressing herself has no restraint").
[49] Nobel (1958a, p.257 and note 8) reads *shanshi* 善事 as good beings ('gute Wesen') based on the Tibetan. In Chinese, however, *shi* 事 does not mean 'beings.'

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
I bow down to the goddess.	I, a certain person, etc., revere and worship [her] with pure and deep heart.	
May she give me a special mass of virtues. May she grant me success in every act. May she continually protect me in the midst of enemies.	By means of this wish, all will be auspicious. In fearful places, she always provides protection.[50]	

Stanza Eight

etān samāptākṣara- *pūrṇavākyān* *kalyaṃ samutthāya* *śucir bravīti /*	若復有人於晨朝 清淨誦此七言偈	若欲祈請辯才天 依此呪讚言詞句 晨朝清淨至誠誦
sarvābhiprāyadhana- *dhānyalābhī*	我令是人悉滿願	於所求事悉隨心
siddhiṃ ca prāpnoti *śivām udārām //*	須者給與無所乏	
(If) one rises up in the morning, and, pure, utters these words full of perfect syllables,[51]	If there be people who at dawn with purity recite these seven-character *gāthā*,	If one wishes to invoke the Eloquence Talent Deity, one [should] resort to these spell(s) and praise(s), words and phrases.[52] At dawn, with purity and utmost sincerity, one [should] recite [them].
one obtains all desires, wealth and grain, and one gains splendid, noble success.	I will let these people have complete fulfillment of [their] wishes. All [their] necessities I will supply, and I will make them lack nothing.	One's desires will all be fulfilled in accordance with one's heart.

[50] The corresponding passage in Yijing for the Sanskrit and Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta has been put into the mouth of the Buddha following Kauṇḍinya's praise (p.437c11–12: see p.308 below). See also p.204 above.
[51] I have changed Emmerick's translation of *etān samāptākṣarapūrṇavākyān*, which he renders as "these complete syllables and full words."
[52] Nobel (1958a, p.257) reads 此呪讚言詞句 in the singular as "diese Zauberformel, diese Lobpreisung und diese Rede" ("this spell, this praise, and this speech").

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA	YIJING
Conclusion		
	説是偈已 令一切衆悉發 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心	爾時佛告婆羅門 善哉善哉 汝能如是 利益衆生 施與安樂 讃彼天女請求 加護獲福無邊
	After pronouncing these *gāthā*, [he said:] May all beings develop the heart of *anuttara samyak* *sambodhi*.	Then the Buddha spoke to the Brahman: Well [done], well [done]. You can in this way benefit beings, giving [them] tranquillity and joy. Praising the goddess and praying [to her], you will obtain protection and your good fortune will be boundless.

APPENDIX B

HERB LISTS FOR THE BATH TAUGHT BY SARASVATĪ IN THE SUTRA OF GOLDEN LIGHT[1]

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA		YIJING	
	Transcription	Translation	Transcription	Translation
1. *vācā* *Acorus calamus*, sweet flag		菖蒲 (1.) *changpu* *Acorus calamus*, sweet flag	跋者 *bazhe* *vācā*	菖蒲 (1.) *changpu* *Acorus calamus*, sweet flag
2. *gorocanā* cow bezoar, cow-gallstone		牛黄 (2.)[2] *niuhuang* cow bezoar, cow-gallstone	瞿盧折娜 *quluzhena* *gorocanā*	牛黄 (2.) *niuhuang* cow bezoar, cow-gallstone
3. *spṛkkā* *Trigonella* *corniculata*, fenugreek		苜蓿香 (3.) *musuxiang* *Medicago* *sativa*, alfalfa	塞畢力迦 *saibilijia* *spṛkkā*	苜蓿香 (3.) *musuxiang* *Medicago* *sativa*, alfalfa
4. *śirīṣa* *Albizzia* *lebbek*, lebbek	尸利沙 *shilisha* *śirīṣa*	合歡 (4.) *hehuan* *Acacia* *julibrissin*, mimosa	尸利灑 *shilisa* *śirīṣa*	合昏樹 (6.) *hehunshu* *Acacia* *julibrissin*, mimosa

[1] Twenty-five herbs appear in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (p.386c13–17), thirty in the extant Sanskrit (p.104, line 6 – p.105, line 3), and thirty-two in Yijing (p.435a1–8). For the identification of the different herbs, I have relied primarily on Nobel (1951), but also on Maue and Sertkaya (1986). The numbering before the Sanskrit terms refers to the order of the medicinal herbs as they appear in the extant Sanskrit. The numbers in parentheses following the Chinese terms indicate where within the sequence they appear in their respective Chinese versions. The reading of the characters, furthermore, represents the modern Chinese reading.

[2] Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta actually read *xionghuang* 雄黄, but this is most probably a mistake for *niuhuang* 牛黄 'cow bezoar,' as already noted by Nobel (1951, p.128, no.2). The term *xionghuang* 雄黄 is given by Yijing as the translation of *manaḥśilā* (Sanskrit no.20), which also appears in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta (no.18) rendered as *shixionghuang* 石雄黄.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA Transcription	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA Translation	YIJING Transcription	YIJING Translation
5. *śāmyaka* *Cedrus deodara*, deodar, Himalayan cedar		甘松香 (5.) *gansongxiang* *Nardostachys*, (spike-)nard	苫弭哆[3] *shanmiche* *śāmyaka*	甘松 (22.) *gansong* *Nardostachys*,[4] (spike-)nard
6. *śamī* *Prosopis spicigera*, leguminous tree of dry land	奢彌[草][5] *shemi[cao]* *śamī*[herb]	苟杞(6.) *gouqi* *Lycium chinense*, Chinese desert-thorn	苫弭 *shanmi* *śamī*	狗杞根(9.) *gouqigen* *Lycium chinense*, Chinese desert-thorn
7. *indrahastā* *Bletilla hyacinthina*, hyacinth orchid		嵩高草[6](8.) *songgaocao* unclear	因達囉喝悉哆 *yindaluo-hexiche* *indrahastā*	白及 (7.) *baiji* *Bletilla hyacinthina*, hyacinth orchid
8. *mahābhāgā* *Moschus*, musk			莫迦婆伽 *moqiepojia* *mahābhāgā*	麝香 (4.) *shexiang* *Moschus*, musk
9. *jñāmaka* unclear			闍莫迦 *shemojia* *jñāmaka*	芎藭 (8.) *qiongqiong* *Conioselinum univittatum*, hemlock parsley

[3] I have corrected the character *ku* 苦 to *shan* 苫 based on the note in the Taishō Canon (vol.16, p.435, note 15). Maue and Sertkaya (1986, p.94, no.22) question what Sanskrit word Yijing's transcription may represent, noting that one would rather expect *nalada* (Sanskrit no.26), which, like *gansong* here (Yijing no.22), also means *Nardostachys*.

[4] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.94, no.22. Nobel had understood the Chinese term 甘松 as a translation of the Sanskrit *devadāru*, *Cedrus deodara* (Nobel 1951, p.129, no.5; 1958a, p.234, note 18).

[5] The character *cao* 草 appears in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, but is not part of the transcription. Cf. Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's no.24 *naluotuocao* 那羅陀草 (corresponding to Sanskrit no.26 *nalada*). Nobel (1951, p.129, no.6) explains that the characterization of *shemi* 奢彌 as *cao* 草 'herb, grass' indicates that it is not the tree known as the *Prosopis spicigera*, as in the case of the Sanskrit *śamī*, but rather a herb/grass.

[6] According to Nobel (1951, p.130), the corresponding Chinese in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta for Sanskrit *indrahastā* can only be *songgaocao* 嵩高草.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA Transcription	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA Translation	YIJING Transcription	YIJING Translation
10. *agaru* *Aquilaria agallocha*,[7] *Aquilaria*		沈香 (9.) *chenxiang* *Aquilaria agallocha*, *Aquilaria*	惡揭嚕 *ejielu* *agaru*	沈香 (13.) *chenxiang* *Aquilaria agallocha*, *Aquilaria*
11. *tvac* *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*,[8] Ceylon cinnamon		桂皮丁香 (10.) *guipidingxiang* *Cinnamomum cassia*, Chinese cinnamon	咄者 *duozhe* *tvac*	桂皮 (11.) *guipi* *Cinnamomum cassia*,[9] Chinese cinnamon
12. *śrīveṣṭaka* *Pinus longifolia* resin, long-leaved Indian pine resin		風香 (11.) *fengxiang* *Liquidambar formosana* resin,[10] Formosa sweetgum resin	室利薜瑟得迦 *shilibisedejia* *śrīveṣṭaka*	松脂 (10.) *songzhi* *Pinus massoniana*, Chinese red pine resin
13. *sarjarasa* *Shorea robusta* resin, Sal tree resin		白膠香 (12.) *baijiaoxiang* *Liquidambar formosana*, Formosa sweetgum	薩折羅娑[11] *sazheluosuo* *sarjarasa*	白膠 (31.) *baijiao* *Liquidambar formosana*, Formosa sweetgum
14. *śallakī* *Boswellia serrata*, Indian olibanum	阿蘿娑 *aluosuo*	煎香 (14.)[12] *jianxiang* unclear	薩洛計 *saluoji* *śallakī*	叱脂 (25.) *chizhi* *chizhi* resin, unclear

[7] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.90, no.13. Nobel 1951, p.130, no.10: *Aquilaria malaccensis*.

[8] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.89, no.11. Nobel 1951, p.130, no.11: *Cinnamomum cassia*.

[9] See Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.90, no.11; Nobel 1951, p.130, no.11.

[10] See Nobel 1951, p.131, nos.12–13.

[11] Here the Taishō edition has the character *po* 婆 (*sazheluopo* 薩折羅婆), which must be a mistake for *suo* 娑.

[12] Nobel (1951, p.132) suggests the Chinese parallel in Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta for Sanskrit *śallakī* can only be *aluosuo jianxiang* 阿蘿娑煎香, which he was unable to understand.

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA		YIJING	
	Transcription	Translation	Transcription	Translation
15. *guggulu rasa* *Balsamodendron* resin, Indian bdellium		安息香 (13.) *anxixiang* *Styrax benzoin*, benzoin, balsamic resin	窶具攞 *jujuluo* *guggulu rasa*	安息香 (27.) *anxixiang* *Styrax mukul benzoin*, benzoin,[13] balsamic resin
16. *tagara* *Ervatamia divaricata*,[14] pinwheel flower		零陵香 (15.) *linglingxiang* *Ocimum basilicum*, yellow sweet clover	多揭羅 *duojieluo* *tagara*	零凌香 (15.) *linglingxiang* *Ocimum basilicum*,[15] yellow sweet clover
17. *patra* *Pogostemon vestitum*,[16] not found		藿香 (7.) *huoxiang* *Pogostemon*, etc., not found	鉢怛羅 *bodaluo* *patra*	藿香 (23.) *huoxiang* *Pogostemon*, etc.,[17] not found
18. *śaileya* *Anethum graveolens*,[18] dill		艾納香 (16.) *ainaxiang* *Laevocamphor*, Malayan camphor, from *Blumea balsamiflora*	世黎也 *shiliye* *śaileya*	艾納 (26.) *aina* *Laevocamphor*, Malayan camphor, from *Blumea balsamiflora*[19]

[13] In the ninth century, benzoin replaced bdellium on the Chinese drug market, but kept the name *anxixiang*, which had originally referred to bdellium (Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.97, no.27). On the name *anxixiang*, meaning the incense of the Parthians or Arsacides (Anxi 安息), see Hōbōgirin 1929-2003, fasc.1, pp.33–34 "Ansokukō." The bathing instructions that follow also specify the burning of *anxixiang*: see Appendix A, p.288 (2. Bath) above.

[14] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.91, no.15. Nobel 1951, p.132, no.16, had *Tabernaemontana coronaria*.

[15] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.91, no.15. Nobel 1951, p.132, no.16, had *Melilotus officinalis*.

[16] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.94, no.23. Nobel 1951, p.133, no.17, had cinnamon tree leaf.

[17] Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.94, no.23: different types of *Pogostemon*, including *Lophanthus rugosus* (Korean mint, wrinkled giant hyssop) and patchouli. Nobel 1951, p.133, no.17, had *Lophanthus rugosus*.

[18] Nevertheless, Nobel (1951, p.133, no.18) notes that *śaileya* is probably *Artemisia* species.

[19] See Maue and Sertkaya 1986, p.96, no.26, who add, however, that *ai* of *ainaxiang* refers to an *Artemisia* plant, and hence that *aina*, both originally and then regionally,

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA		YIJING	
	Transcription	Translation	Transcription	Translation
19. *candana* *Santalum album*, sandalwood		栴檀香 (17.) *zhantanxiang* *Santalum album*, sandalwood	栴檀娜 *zhantannuo* *candana*	栴檀 (14.)[20] *zhantan* *Santalum album*, sandalwood
20. *manaḥśilā* *Realgar*, red arsenic sulfide		石雄黄 (18.) *shixionghuang* *Realgar*, red arsenic sulfide	末㮈眵羅[21] *monaichiluo* *manaḥśilā*	雄黄 (5.) *xionghuang* *Realgar*, red arsenic sulfide
21. *sarocanā* *Concretio Silicea Bambusae*, Tabasheer			鴝路戰娜 *guluzhannuo* *sarocanā*	竹黄 (20.) *zhuhuang* *Concretio Silicea Bambusae*, Tabasheer
22. *kuṣṭha* *Costus speciosus* (or *C. arabicus*), crepe ginger		靑木香 (19.) *qingmuxiang* *Aristolochia recurvilabra*, not found	矩瑟侘 *jusecha* *kuṣṭha*	靑木 (32.) *qingmu* *Aristolochia recurvilabra*, not found
23. *kuṅkuma* *Crocus sativus*, saffron		欝金香 (20.) *yujinxiang* *Curcuma longa*, turmeric	茶矩麼 *chajumo* *kuṅkuma*	欝金 (17.) *yujin* *Curcuma longa*, turmeric
24. *musta* *Cyperus rotundus*, nut grass		附子 (21.) *fuzi* *Cyperus rotundus*, nut grass	目窣哆 *musuche* *musta*	香附子 (12.) *xiangfuzi* *Cyperus rotundus*, nut grass

continued to mean a special *Artemisia* species. It is in this latter sense that Tib. III understood Yijing's *aina*. Cf. Nobel 1951, p.133, no.18: *Artemisia* plant.

[20] In this case the transcribed Sanskrit (*zhantannuo* 栴檀娜) has been treated like a Chinese term (*zhantan* 栴檀).

[21] The character 㮈 *nai*, however, is referred to as 捺 *na* in the note to the Taishō Canon (vol.16, p.435, note 6).

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA		YIJING	
	Transcription	Translation	Transcription	Translation
25. *sarṣapa* *Sinapis*, mustard seed		芥子 (22.) *jiezi* *Sinapis glauca*, sarhya mustard, yellow sarson	薩利殺跛 *salishabo* *sarṣapa*	芥子 (28.) *jiezi* *Sinapis glauca*, sarhya mustard, yellow sarson
26. *nalada* *Nardostachys jatamansi*, (spike-)nard	那羅陀[草] (24.) *naluotuo* [*cao*] *nalada* [herb]		捺刺柁 *nalatuo* *nalada*	葦香 (19.) *weixiang* unclear
27. *cavya* *Piper chaba*? unclear			葉婆儞 *sheponi* *yavanī* *Trachy-spermum copticum*, Ajowan caraway	馬芹 (29.) *maqin* unclear[22]
28. *sūkṣmaśaila* *Elettaria cardamomum*, cardamom	縮師蜜 *sushimi* *sūkṣma*	鬱金根 (23.) *yujingen* *Curcuma longa*,[23] turmeric	蘇泣迷羅 *suqimiluo* *sūkṣma*[*śai*]*la*	細豆蔻 (21.) *xidoukou* *Amomum globosum*, Chi. cardamom
29. *uśīra* *Andropogon muricatus*, vetiver grass			嗢尸羅 *woshiluo* *uśīra*	茅根香 (24.) *maogexiang* *Andropogon schoenanthus*,[24] oil plant
30. *nāgakesara* *Mesua ferrea*, ironwood		龍華 (25.) *longhua* *Mesua ferrea*, ironwood	那伽雞薩羅 *naqiejisaluo*	龍花鬚 (30.) *longhuaxu* *Mesua ferrea*, ironwood

[22] See Nobel 1951, p.136, no.29. Despite Yijing's transcription of *yavanī* (*sheponi* 葉婆儞) rather than *cavya*, Nobel (1951, p.135, no.27) suggests that it is a substitute for *cavya*.

[23] Since *yujin* 鬱金 appears already as no.20 of Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, corresponding to Sanskrit no.23 *kuṅkuma*, Nobel (1951, p.135) suggests that Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese rendering of *sūkṣmaśaila* here is wrong.

[24] Nobel gives the significance *Andropogon schoenanthus* for the two characters *maoxiang* 茅香 (Nobel 1951, p.135; 1958a, p.234, note 20).

SANSKRIT	YAŚOGUPTA/ JÑĀNAGUPTA		YIJING	
	Transcription	Translation	Transcription	Translation
			索瞿者 *suoquzhe* unclear	丁子 (16.) *dingzi* *Carophyllus aromaticus*
			揭羅娑 *jieluosuo* *karpūra*?[25] *Dryobalanops aromatica*, Borneo camphor tree	婆律膏 (18.) *polügao* *Dryobalanops aromatica*,[26] Borneo camphor tree

[25] According to Nobel (1951, p.136, no.18), the transcription *jieluosuo* 揭羅娑 should probably read *chieh-p'o-lo* (*jiepoluo*) for Sanskrit *karpūra*, to which *Dryobalanops aromatica* corresponds, but adds that the Sanskrit word behind the transcription remains doubtful.

[26] Maue and Sertkaya (1986, pp.92-93, no.18) suggest that *polügao* 婆律膏, corresponding to Uighur *yürün küzi* (Olibanum, frankincense), may have been misunderstood.

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INDEX

abhaya mudrā, no fear hand gesture 234, 233n, 262
Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi by Hemacandra 245
abhiṣeka, anointing 178–82, 219, 273
Acacia julibrissin 309
Acharya, Diwakar 248n
Acorus calamus 309
adharma, unrighteousness 99
adholoka, lower realm, Jaina cosmology 245
ádhvan, way, course, journey 25, 25n
adhvará, sacrificial ceremony 25, 25n
adhvaryú priest 43n, 55n
adhyāya, chapter 112, 115
Āditya, Sun 71
See also Sun
Ādityas, group of deities 26
See also Mitra, Varuṇa
Ādivarāha Maṇḍapa, Mahābalipuram 262, 264
Afghanistan xviii, 9–10, 200–01, 251, 259, 262, 264, 266, 269, 274
agaru, *Aquilaria* 311
aghalá, dangerous 70n
Agni, Fire 14, 22n, 24–25, 25n, 28–29, 32n, 40, 40n, 41, 41n, 56, 58, 63–64, 66, 70–71
Agni Purāṇa 247, 247n, 261n
agnídh priest 43n
Agnihotra sacrifice 113, 113n, 114
Agniṣṭoma sacrifice 101
Agra District, Uttar Pradesh 252
Agrawala, R. C. 252n
Ahalyā, wife of Gautama, seduced by Indra 55
Aihole, Karnataka xvii, 260, 265n
aina 艾納, Malayan camphor 312, 313n
ainaxiang 艾納香, Malayan camphor 312, 312n
Airi, Raghunath 2, 37, 51
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 10, 36–37, 59, 62n, 65, 67–73, 77–78, 82–83, 85, 90, 90n
Ajowan caraway 314
Ākoṭā, Gujarat xvi, 241–44, 249
akṛtam, what is not done 69, 69n
akṣa, seed or fruit of *Terminalia bellerica* tree 132
akṣamālā, rosary 132
See also akṣamālikā, akṣamaṇi, akṣasūtra, rosary
akṣamālikā, rosary 247
See also akṣamālā, akṣamaṇi, akṣasūtra, rosary
akṣamaṇi, rosary 129, 132
See also akṣamālā, akṣamālikā, akṣasūtra, rosary
akṣasūtra, rosary 131–32, 246
See also akṣamālā, akṣamālikā, akṣamaṇi, rosary
Alambusā, Apsaras 109, 109n
Ālampūr, Andhra Pradesh xvii, 260
Ālampūr Museum xvii, 260
Albizzia lebbek 309
alfalfa 309
All Gods 28
See also viśve devāḥ
Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh 1
Allahabad Museum 247n
Allahabad pillar inscription 235
Allan, John 235n, 236, 237n
altar place 165, 165n, 168, 286, 286n, 288–89, 291, 293, 297
See also tanchang 壇場
Altekar, Anant Sadashiv 237n
Amarāvatī, Andhra Pradesh 229
Amber Museum, Rajasthan 252n
American Institute of Indian Studies xvi–xvii, 240n
Amitābha, Buddha 268
Amomum globosum 314
amukasya, so-and-so 188–89, 189n
amulets, vegetal 173, 173n
amuyā bhū, become in that way 71n
Anantavarman of the Maukharis 255
ancestors, Fathers 56
See also Fathers, *pitṛ*
Andhra Pradesh xv, xvii, 10, 228, 260

Government of Andhra Pradesh xvii
Andropogon muricatus 314
Andropogon schoenanthus 314, 314n
Anethum graveolens 312
Aṅgiras priests 60
animal offerings 45
animal-headed musicians, Gandharvas 239
horse-headed 239
ape-headed 239
See also Gandharvas
animal-headed women, Mothers 213
bird-headed women 213
See also Mātṛ(kā)s, Mothers
Añjasī river 50, 50n
Aṅkoṭṭaka, Gujarat 241
Anser indicus, goose 134
See also goose, *haṃsa*
anuttara samyak sambodhi, highest perfect awakening 161, 161n, 206, 282, 295–96, 308
See also highest perfect awakening
anuvyañjana, minor marks on Buddha's body 194, 194n
See also hao 好, minor marks
Anxi 安息, Arsacides 288n, 312n
anxixiang 安息香, incense of the Parthians or Arsacides 288n, 312, 312n
See also benzoin, balsamic resin
Apāṃ Napāt, son of the Waters 11, 110
apāna, inhalation 40n
Aparājita, Buddhist deity (m.) 170n
Aparājitā, Buddhist goddess 170, 170n
Aparṇā, name of Pārvatī, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Āpas, Waters 11, 16–19, 48n, 49, 51, 103, 105, 136
See also Waters
ápavrata, against *vrata* 67, 119n
Āpayā river 14
aphrodisiacs, science of 175n
Aponaptrīya hymn 86, 86n
Āprī hymns, *āprī-sūkta*, of the *Ṛg Veda* 24, 43
Apsaras(es) 71, 74, 74n, 100, 100n, 109, 109n, 111, 120n, 227n, 239
See also Alambusā, Tilottamā
Aquilaria 311
Aquilaria agallocha 311
Aquilaria malaccensis 311n
Āraṇyakas 10
Archaeological Museum, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh 252, 252n, 259–60
Archaeological Survey of India xvi
Archaeology and Museums Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh xvii
Ardhanārīśvara Śiva 127
Ardoxsho, goddess 236n
Aristolochia recurvilabra 313
Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍava brothers 215n
armour 165, 212, 266, 287
worn by
Four Great Kings 266
four men in altar space 165, 287
Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 212
arrow(s) 64–65, 67, 119n, 120, 166, 197, 200, 251, 258, 260–61, 263–65, 289, 305
carried by
Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 200, 251, 258, 264
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 260–61, 263, 265
Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 305
Arsacides, Anxi 安息 288n, 312n
Artemisia 312n, 313n
Aruṇā river 98, 98n, 103, 109, 109n
Āryā, Noble One 211
Aryadeva 234
See also Deva, venerable
Āryaśāsanaprakaraṇa 156n
ascetic goddess in Kauṇḍinya's praises 183–85, 207, 299
ascetic practices 100, 185–86
See also austerities, *mahātapas*, *tapas*
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford 252
asterism(s) 168, 179–80, 284–85, 292–93, 295
See also constellation(s)
astrologer 179n
astrology 173
Asukaen 飛鳥園 xviii
Asuras, demons 121n, 192, 192n, 202–03, 215, 215n, 261, 302, 302n, 305–06

See also demons
Aśvamedha, horse sacrifice 26n, 53–54, 58, 98n, 101, 236n
Aśvapati, king 123–24
Aśvatara, Nāga king 130, 131n
Aśvins, the celestial twins 21, 21n, 28, 38, 44–47, 47n, 48n, 52, 172, 176, 176n
Atharva Veda 4, 9, 9n, 34, 40–43, 60, 65–66, 74n, 75, 87–89, 140, 162, 162n, 173–76, 219
Atharvan priests 60
ātman, Self 36, 36n, 134–35, 135n
Auddālaka, descendant of Uddālaka 103, 103n
auṣadhi, medicinal herbs 162, 171, 283–84, 296
See also herbs, *oṣadhi*
austerities 104, 108–10, 123–25, 130
See also ascetic practices, *mahātapas*, *tapas*
avagāhasveda, bath sudation 176
avaivartika, irreversible stage 161, 161n, 282, 295
Avajā, low-born 188
Avajavatī 188
Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva 264
avatāra, descent/incarnation 99, 106, 106n, 107, 139, 273
See also Kṛṣṇa, Matsya, Narasiṃha, Rāma
Avestan origin 236n
axe, implement 197, 236, 258, 259n, 265, 267n, 305
carried by
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 259n, 265
Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 267n, 305
Āyurveda, Āyurvedic medicine 174–76
āyus, life 168n

bad dreams 162, 284, 295
Bagalāmukhī, one of the ten Mahāvidyās 268
Bahawalpur, Pakistan 4
bahuvrīhi compound 12n, 13n, 18n, 20–21, 21n, 45n
baijiao 白膠, Formosa sweetgum 311
baijiaoxiang 白膠香, Formosa sweetgum 288n, 311
Bajpai, K. D. 2, 233n, 234
Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa's brother 101, 101n
Balendraketu, king, *Sutra of Golden Light* 153
balsamic resin 312
Balsamodendron resin 312
Bāṇa, court poet of Harṣa (r. 606–47), author of *Caṇḍīśataka* 255, 264
Banaskantha District, Gujarat xvii, 246
Banerjea, Jitendra Nath 2, 227n
banner(s) 12n, 165, 165n, 236, 287, 287n, 288
baochuang 寶幢, precious standards 288n
Baogui 寶貴 edition of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. *See under Sutra of Golden Light*, Baogui edition
Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri (ca. 743–838), author of *Caturvaṃśathā* 233–34
Barābar Hill, Bihar 255
Barbaras, tribe 211
Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat 241
Barrett, Douglas 253n
Barter for Soma 72–84, 106, 106n, 107, 115, 133, 139, 230, 272–73
Barua, Benimadhab 227n
bath sudation, *avagāhasveda* 176
bathing ritual 3n, 5, 154, 162–83, 219, 273, 277, 283–97, 309–15
battle goddess 5, 154, 183, 199n, 200–01, 220, 225, 254, 274–75
Bautze, Joachim 267
bdellium 312n
Indian bdellium 288, 312
Beas river 88
beauty 1, 84, 111, 114–15, 119n, 120, 125, 129n, 192–94
bell, implement 254, 258, 259n, 260–62, 262n
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 254, 258, 259n, 260–62, 262n
Benfey, Theodor 25n
Bengal 10, 237
Benveniste, Émile 47
Benzaiten 辯才天, Japanese Sarasvatī xviii, 1–3, 3n, 200, 200n, 216, 230n, 266, 266n, 274
eight-armed xviii, 200, 200n, 216, 266, 274

two-armed 230n
wielding weapons 266
benzoin 312, 312n
Bergaigne, Abel 13n, 18n, 19, 49
Berlin xvii, 230n, 259
beseeching spell 169, 293
See also yuanzhou 願呪
Bhagavatī Sūtra 234n
Bhairavī Devī, one of the ten Mahāvidyās 268
Bharatas 25, 35
Bhāratī, goddess 11, 24–26, 35, 38, 43, 43n, 51, 87, 89
See also brahmavādinī, hótrā bhā́ratī
bhāratī, speech 128, 128n, 129
Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh xv, 227–28, 228n, 229n, 248
Bhattacharya, B. C. 245
Bhattacharyya, Kanailal 2, 38, 227n, 229n
Bhattasali, Nalini Kanta 2, 233n, 237n
Bhela Saṃhitā 176n
bhikṣu, monk 158n, 278–79, 283–84, 293–95
bhikṣuṇī, nun 294–95
Bhīṣma, grand-uncle of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas 112
Bhīṣma Parvan, *Mahābhārata* 215n
Bhramaramātā, goddess 254
chariot drawn by lions 254
Bhūtapati, Rudra 65, 69–70
See also Rudra
Bhūtas, spirits 191, 203, 207, 210, 214, 301, 305–06
bian 辯, eloquence 278n
See also eloquence
biancai 辯才, eloquence-talent 217, 281n
See also eloquence
Biancai tiannü 辯才天女. *See* Biancaitian 辯才天
Biancaitian 辯才天, Biancai tiannü 辯才天女, Biantian 辯天 3, 154–56, 196, 200, 200n, 209, 211, 214, 216–18, 220, 251, 266–69, 274
carrying
arrows 197, 258, 305
axe 197, 258, 267n, 305
bow 197, 258, 305
lasso 197, 258, 267n, 305
spear 197, 258, 305
sword 197, 258, 305
vajra 197, 258–59, 267n, 305
wheel 197, 258, 305
eight-armed 200, 200n, 216, 266, 274
image to be drawn 208–09
vision of Biancaitian 209
wielding weapons 266, 269
Biantian 辯天. *See* Biancaitian 辯才天
Biardeau, Madeleine 95n, 96, 117, 117n
Bihar 265
bīja, grain seeds 179
Biographies of Eminent Monks 150–52
See also Gaoseng zhuan 高僧傳
bird-headed women. *See under* animal-headed women
birth-and-death cycle 160, 161n, 171, 282, 295
See also saṃsāra
biwa 琵琶, lute 230n
Black (*Kṛṣṇa*) *Yajur Veda* 9–10, 44, 53
Bletilla hyacinthina 310
Blumea balsamiflora 312
bodhi, awakening 165n
Bodhi tree 165n, 188
bodhimaṇḍa, place/platform for attaining awakening 165n, 286n
Bodhisattva(s) 146, 180, 185–86, 211, 217
body spell 167–69, 290, 292–93
See also shenzhou 身呪
body-protection spell 169, 293
See also hushenzhou 護身呪
Böhtlingk, Otto 16n, 18n, 21n, 24n, 27
Boluomotuo 波羅末陀, Paramārtha (500–69) 149
book. *See* manuscript/book, *pusta/pustaka*
Book of Consecration 180
See also Guanding jing 灌頂經
Borneo camphor tree 315
Boswellia serrata 311
botanical terminology 163
boundaries tying. *See jiejie* 結界, *sīmābandha*
boundaries-tying spell 166, 289
See also jiejiezhou 結界呪
bow, implement 36, 197, 200, 251,

258, 260–65, 305
carried by
Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 200, 251, 258, 264
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 260–63, 265
Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 305
Rudra's bow 36
bow-shaped harp 227, 227n, 228, 228n, 235, 236n
See also harp, *vīṇā*
Braarvig, Jens 159
Brahmā, creator god 4, 52, 61n, 63–66, 72, 82, 82n, 83, 87, 91, 103, 107, 116–23, 127–30, 130n, 133, 133n, 135, 139, 141, 170–71, 186, 246–47, 250, 272–73
consort Brahmāṇī 133
daughter/consort Sarasvatī. *See under* Sarasvatī, daughter/consort of Brahmā
haṃsa mount 133, 135
See also pitāmaha
Brahma Purāṇa 72n, 73, 82–84, 106, 118, 118n
Brahmaloka, abode of Brahmā 130
bráhman
Absolute 36, 36n, 113, 130, 135n
Atharva Veda spell 74n
hymn/stanza, truth formulation 34, 37, 65, 74, 74n, 79–81, 86
spell, charm 80
Brahman(s), class 86, 95–96, 98–99, 102, 128, 129n, 137, 146, 154, 154n, 179n, 183, 190–91, 204, 206–07, 217–20, 236n, 273, 298, 301, 308
Brahman seer(s), *brahmarṣi* 98
brahman-practice, *brahmacarya*, celibacy 211
Brāhmaṇas, texts 3–4, 10, 11n, 45, 52–53, 53n, 57, 59–60, 66, 72, 72n, 73, 81, 84, 87–89, 106, 111, 116, 118, 118n, 121, 128, 134, 138, 140, 249, 272
Brahmaṇaspati 40, 61n
See also Vācaspati
Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 118
Brahmāṇī xvii, 119, 122, 131–33, 139, 141, 229, 246
carrying
rosary 131, 246
water pot 131, 246
consort of Brahmā 133
four-armed 246
four-faced 246
haṃsa mount 229
Mātṛkā 246–48, 250
two-armed 246
brahmarṣi, Brahman seer(s) 98
brahmavādín, person involved in *brahmódya*, wise person 25
brahmavādinī, one expounding Vedic texts, Bhāratī 25
Brahmavāsinī, Sarasvatī 129, 129n
Brāhmī script 231
brahmódya, discussion on Vedic thought 25, 25n
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 134, 135n
Bṛhaddevatā 35, 35n
bṛhaddivā́, from high heaven 13, 13n
Bṛhaddivā, goddess 13n
Bṛhaspati 61n
See also Vācaspati
Bṛhat Saṃhitā by Varāhamihira 179n
The British Library 150
The British Museum xv, xvii, 228, 248
bronze images 228, 228n, 241–45, 249
Buddha 107, 146, 158, 160, 162, 165n, 167, 171–72, 180, 183, 189, 194, 204, 206, 208, 217–18, 228, 265, 278, 293, 297–98, 298n, 304n, 307n, 308
Buddhaghosa (fifth century) 176
buddhakṣetra, territory of the Buddha 265
Buddhas 160, 160n, 180, 208, 217–18, 280
Buddhism and medicine 162–78
Buddhist Canon 145n, 148, 148n, 189–90, 217, 310n, 311n, 313n
Ming edition 148n
Song edition 148n
Taishō edition 145n, 148, 148n, 189–90, 217, 310n, 311n, 313n
Yuan edition 148n
Buddhist Sarasvatī 1, 3–5, 145–221, 225–26, 239, 248, 266–69, 271, 273–74
buffalo sacrifices 213n
Bühler, G. 231n, 232n
van Buitenen, J. A. B. 113n, 120n
bull(s) 11, 22n, 29–30, 35, 45n, 50, 51

See also vṛṣabhá, *vṛ́ṣan*
Burgess, James 247n

C. arabicus 313
cakra, delimited sacred space 180
Cakreśvarī, one of the sixteen Jain Vidyādevīs 244
calamities 162, 169, 179–80, 284, 293, 295
Caland, Willem 70n, 72n, 80n, 81, 81n
Calcutta, Kolkata 227
Cāḷukya(s) 260–62
Camasodbheda 98, 136
Cambodia 263
candana, sandalwood 129n, 313
Caṇḍī
Buddhist veneration of 264
Warrior Goddess 264, 264n
See also Cuṇḍī
Caṇḍīśataka by Bāṇa 255, 264
Candragupta II (r. ca. 375–413), king 236, 236n, 237, 253, 253n, 254
Candramas, Moon 71
See also Moon
cao 草, herb 310, 310n, 314
See also herbs
Caraka Saṃhitā 176, 176n
cardamom 314
See also Chinese cardamom
Carophyllus aromaticus 315
caturmahārāja, Four Great Kings 147
See also Four Great Kings
Caturvaṃśathā by Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri 234
cavya, *Piper chaba* (?) 314, 314n
Cedrus deodara 310, 310n
celestial eye 208, 209n
See also divyaṃ cakṣuḥ, *tianyan* 天眼
Central Asia 134
Ceylon 288n
Ceylon cinnamon 311
Chandra, Lokesh 188, 188n, 189–90
changpu 菖蒲, sweet flag 309
charm(s) 9, 74, 74n, 75n, 76–77, 79, 159, 173
See also bráhman, incantation(s), mantra(s), spell(s)
Chen Jinhua xi, 148n
cheng 乘, to mount, to excel 198, 198n, 305n
cheng shizi 乘師子 198
cheng shizi shang 乘師子上 198
chenxiang, *Aquilaria* 311
chezhita 哆姪哋, *tadyathā* 164, 167n
See also dazhita 怛姪他, *tadyathā*
China 148n, 151–53, 180, 212n, 215, 256–57, 264, 266–67
Chinese cardamom 314
Chinese cinnamon 311
Chinese desert-thorn 310
Chinese medical practices compared to Indian medicine by Yijing 177n
Chinese red pine resin 311
Chinese Turkestan 150
chizhi 叱脂 resin 311
chopper, implement 268
carried by Vajrasarasvatī 268
Chos Grub, ninth-century translator of Yijing's Chinese *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 150
Choṭī Sādrī, Rajasthan 254
chowries 212
Chu sanzang ji ji 出三藏記集 by Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518) 148n, 150n
Cinnamomum cassia 311, 311n
Cinnamomum zeylanicum 311
cinnamon
Ceylon cinnamon 311
Chinese cinnamon 311
cinnamon tree leaf 312n
Citra, king 48, 48n, 49n
coins xv, 235–38
archer type, Samācāradeva 237
battle-axe type, Samudragupta 236
cakravikrama type, Candragupta II 237, 237n
horseman type, Kumāragupta I 237, 237n
lion-slayer type, Candragupta II 237, 237n
lyrist type
Kumāragupta I 235n
Samudragupta xv, 235–36
rājalīlā type, Samācāradeva xv, 237–38
sceptre type
Candragupta II 236, 236n
Samudragupta 236, 236n
tiger-slayer type, Kumāragupta I 237, 237n
Commentary on the Mahāmegha [Great Cloud] *Sūtra* 153n
conch, implement 200, 259n, 260–63
carried by
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 259n, 260–63
Narasiṃha 200
Concretio Silicea Bambusae 313
confession, Buddhism 146–47
Conioselinum univittatum 310
constellation(s) 168n, 169, 179, 284–85, 292
See also asterism(s)
conventional truth, *saṃvṛtisatya* 191, 191n
Coomaraswamy, Ananda 227, 227n
Cort, John 245
cosmic man, king as 178
Costus speciosus 313
cow(s) 11, 11n, 21n, 24, 24n, 29–31, 33n, 34, 34n, 35, 38–39, 49n, 59, 75, 113n
See also dhenú, *dhenuṣṭarī́*, *gó*, Pṛ́śni
cow bezoar 309, 309n
cow-dung 165, 286–87
cow-gallstone 309
cranium, implement 268
carried by Vajrasarasvatī 268
crepe ginger 313
Crocus sativus 313
cun 寸, measurement 165n, 286n
Cuṇḍī, Caṇḍī 264
See also Caṇḍī
cup, implement 262
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 262
Curcuma longa 313–14
curses 102, 105, 108, 121, 127–28, 138, 162, 284n
cymbals 239, 288n
played by Apsarases 239
Cyperus rotundus 313

Da Biancai tiannü 大辯才天女 149, 155–56
See also Biancaitian 辯才天
Da Biantian 大辯天 149, 154, 155, 219
See also Biancaitian 辯才天
Da Biantianshen 大辯天神 148, 154, 155
See also Biancaitian 辯才天
Da Dishennü 大地神女 156, 156n
See also Dishen 地神, Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Earth Deity, Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神
Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女 156, 156n
See also Gongdetian 功徳天, Kichijōten 吉祥天, Lakṣmī, Śrī
Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 156n
Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing shu 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經疏 156n
Dacca, Bangladesh 56
Dadhīca, sage 99, 100n, 109, 109n, 110, 116
dagger, implement 263
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 263
Dange, S. A. 63, 66
daochang 道場, place of the way 165, 165n, 286, 286n, 287–88, 294
See also place of the way
Darśanajyotis by Jīvabhogin (sixth century) 248n
dāsa, aborigines, servants/slaves 10
dasyu, aborigines 10
Davidson, Ronald M. 181, 181n
Dawn 12n, 66, 68
See also Uṣas
dazhita 怛姪他 164, 167n, 169
See also chezhita 哆姪哋, *tadyathā*
Debrunner, Albert 12n
Deccan 255, 255n
defender of the Dharma 5, 210, 216, 220, 265–66, 269, 271
Dehejia, Vidya 260–61, 262n
demonic forces 173
demonology 175n
demons 72n, 100, 109, 120n, 121n, 173, 186, 191, 203, 213, 218, 220, 254, 284, 284n, 299, 301
See also Asuras, *devāsurendraiḥ*, disease-demons, *guishen* 鬼神, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Kākhordas, Mahiṣa, Namuci, Nisumbha, Rākṣasas, Sumbha, Sunda, Upasunda
deodar 310
Deogarh 256
Deva, venerable 231, 231n, 232, 234
See also Aryadeva
devadāru, *Cedrus deodara* 310n
Devagiri, mountain 82, 82n
devakanyā, celestial maiden 123, 123n

Devas, gods 28n, 34n, 65, 67n, 68–71, 72n, 74, 76–81, 82n, 86n, 113n, 121n, 187, 192, 202–03, 215n, 294, 301, 302n, 305–06
  See also gods
devāsurendraiḥ, by the lords (*indra*) of gods and demons 202, 203, 305
devatā, deity(ies), god(s) 83, 100, 102n, 227n
  See also gods
Devī 126, 198, 267
  See also great Goddess
Devī Māhātmya 117, 126, 198, 198n, 213, 213n, 215n, 255, 258, 258n, 261, 261n
Dharā, goddess, forbearance 126
  form of Sarasvatī 126
dhāraṇī, incantation 156, 156n, 157, 159, 159n, 160, 166n, 167n, 169, 178, 187–88, 189n, 190, 209n, 212, 215n, 264, 264n, 279–80, 280n, 305n
  See also incantation(s), *Mārīcī dhāraṇī*, *Molizhi tian tuoluoni zhou jing* 摩利支天陀羅尼呪經, spells, *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼, Wuranzhuo tuoluoni *pin* 無染著陀羅尼品, Yinzhu tuoluoni *pin* 銀主陀羅尼品, *zhou* 呪, *zongchi* 總持
Dharma, Buddhism 5, 146, 150–51, 160, 189, 210, 216–17, 220, 265–66, 269, 271, 283, 293
Dharma, Hinduism 98, 99, 99n, 104n 106, 110n, 111–12, 114, 119n, 124, 129, 136, 272
Dharma king, Hinduism 99, 99n
dharmabhāṇaka, orator of the sutra 160, 278–79, 283, 293
Dharmakṣema (385–433 or 436), Tanwuchen 曇無讖 148
  Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. *See under Sutra of Golden Light*, Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation
Dhaumya, priest of the Pāṇḍavas 97, 101
dhénā, nourishing streams 32, 32n, 33, 33n, 34
dhenú, cow(s) 24n, 29–31, 31n, 32, 33n, 34
  See also cow(s)
dhenuṣṭarī́, milch cow who has ceased to give milk 59
  See also cow(s)
dhī́, inspired thought 11, 26–35, 37–39, 42, 60, 87, 89, 140, 271
  See also inspired thought
dhīra, thoughtful, wise 34, 42, 114n, 185, 185n
Dhiṣaṇā, one of the wives of the gods 25n
dill 312
dingzi 丁子, *Carophyllus aromaticus* 315
disc, implement 200
  carried by Narasiṃha 200
disease(s) 17, 162, 171–73, 173n, 174, 180, 284, 293–95
disease-demons 173
Dishen 地神, Pṛthivī 156n
  See also Da Dishennü 大地神女, Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Earth Deity, Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神
Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī 156n
  See also Da Dishennü 大地神女, Dishen 地神, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Earth Deity, Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神
Dishi 帝釋, Śakra (Indra) 203, 306
  See also Indra, Śakra
divó arkā́ḥ, celestial songs 23, 23n
Divodāsa, son of Vadhryaśva 14n
divyaṃ cakṣuḥ, celestial eye 209n
  See also celestial eye, *tianyan* 天眼
Doniger, Wendy 55
Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Strong Earth Deity 155–56, 156n
  See also Da Dishennü 大地神女, Dishen 地神, Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Earth Deity, Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神
Dṛṣadvatī river 14
drum
  played by
    Brahman, *Sutra of Golden Light* 146
    Gandharva 239
Dryobalanops aromatica 315, 315n
duanyan 端嚴, proper and majestic 193–94, 303, 304n
duanzheng 端正, proper 194, 201, 303–04, 305n

dumbness, cured through Sarasvatī sacrifice 127, 138
Dundas, Paul 226n, 234n
Dunhuang 149n
Duquenne, Robert 265n
Durgā 197, 210, 213, 215, 215n, 255, 266
Durgā Stotra, *Mahābhārata* 215n
Durgā Temple, Aihole, Karnataka xvii, 260, 265n
Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, traditionally accepted author of the *Mahābhārata* 212
  See also Vyāsa, Zhouzhu 洲渚
Dvaita lake 97n
Dvāpara age 127
Dvāraka city 101n
dvija, twice-born 123n, 127n
  See also twice-born
Dvita, brother of sage Trita 101, 101n
Dyaus, Sky 62, 66–68, 72
  daughter/consort of Prajāpati 66–68
  See also Sky
Dyumatsena, king 123–24

Earth 40, 40n, 41, 41n, 64n
Earth Deity, Dishen 地神 150–52, 152n, 156n
  See also Da Dishennü 大地神女, Dishen 地神, Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神
Earth Deity King, Dishen wang 地神王 151–52
Eggeling, Julius 54n
eight-armed
  Benzaiten xviii, 200, 216, 266, 274
  Biancaitian 200, 216, 266
  goddess from Swāt 263n
  Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 212, 220, 251, 258, 265
  Mahiṣāsuramardinī xvii–xviii, 200, 213–14, 251, 258–66, 269, 274
  Narasiṃha 198, 200
  Sarasvatī
    dancing 248n
    Sutra of Golden Light 5, 195, 197–200, 207, 214, 216, 219–20, 225–26, 251, 258–59, 264–69, 273–75
  Vāgīśvarī 267
eight-stanza praise of Kauṇḍinya 154n, 183–84, 190–207, 209, 214, 217, 219–20, 251, 277, 301–08
eightfold treatise of medicine 175, 175n
Einoo Shingo 85
Ekaparṇā, name of Durgā, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Ekata, brother of sage Trita 101, 101n
Elephanta cave, Maharashtra 247n
Elettaria cardamomum 314
elixirs, science of 175n
Ellorā, Maharashtra xvii, 247, 247n, 250, 262n
eloquence 3n, 125–26, 158, 161–62, 171, 183, 187, 207–08, 210, 212, 214, 216–20, 266, 274, 278, 281
  See also bian 辯, *biancai* 辯才
Eloquence Deity/Goddess 155n, 191–92, 217, 225, 293, 296, 301–02
  See also Biantian 辯天 *under* Biancaitian 辯才天
Eloquence Talent Deity/Goddess 1, 154, 156, 177, 184, 187, 191, 205, 207, 209, 209n, 216–17, 220, 269, 274–75, 278, 293, 296–300, 307
  See also Biancaitian 辯才天
embryo 15, 40, 46–47, 52, 56, 61
Emmerick, Ronald E. 146n, 147, 147n, 187n, 192n, 193n, 196n, 205n, 277, 280n, 284n, 300n, 302n, 305n, 307n
empirico-rational healing 174–75
empowerment ritual 178, 180
epidemics 162
Epigraphia Indica 231n, 254n
Ervatamia divaricata 312
esoteric Buddhism 175, 181
evil deities 284, 295
evil stars, *e xing* 惡星 162, 180, 284, 293, 295
ewe, offered to Sarasvatī 53, 54, 54n, 55, 58, 87, 140
  See also meṣī́

Fathers 41n, 82
  See also pitṛ

Fei Zhangfang 費長房, author of *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 (presented to the court in 598) 149n, 151
fenugreek 309
Fergusson, James 247n
fillet, implement xv, 235–37
carried by
female on coins 236
on Samudragupta coin xv, 235–36
Lakṣmī on Gupta coins 236n, 237
on Candragupta coin 237
Filliozat, Jean 176, 176n
fire, sacred 14, 35, 84–85, 89
flags 165, 165n, 288
flute
played by
female musician 228
Gandharva 239
ford(s) 4, 98–100
See also tīrtha
Formosa sweetgum 288n, 311
resin 311
Forte, Antonino xi, 151, 153, 257n
Foucher, Alfred 230
Four Great Kings 147, 152, 153n, 181, 215, 215n, 216, 216n, 266
wearing armour 266
wielding weapons 216, 266
See also caturmahārāja
four-armed
Brahmāṇī 246
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252, 252n, 259, 263
Sarasvatī 128, 131–32, 139, 228–29, 238–41, 247, 273
dancing Sarasvatī 248n
four-faced
Brahmāṇī 246
Śiva 120n
frankincense 315n
Führer, A. 231
fuzi 附子, nut grass 313

gaṇa, Koḷeya 231–32, 232n
Gaṇas, encircling Mahiṣāsuramardinī 261
gandha, fragrant, perfume 113n, 114n, 179
Gandhāra 10, 230, 248
Gandharva(s) 72–84, 100, 106, 133, 192, 203, 228, 239, 301–02, 302n, 306
See also animal-headed musicians, Pañcaśikha, Viśvāvasu
Gandharvī 230
Gaṅgā
goddess 244, 247, 247n, 250
makara mount 247
river 1, 98, 98n, 101
gaṇin, head of a school 231–32
gaṇinī, nun 242
gansong 甘松, (spike)-nard 310, 310n
gansongxiang 苷松香, (spike)-nard 310
Gansu, China 148n
Gaofeng 高峰, Vālmīki 212
See also Vālmīki
Gaoseng zhuan 高僧傳, *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 150
See also Biographies of Eminent Monks
Gardez, Afghanistan xviii, 262, 262n, 263
Gardez marble image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī xviii, 262–63
gāthā, verse, song 74, 74n, 75, 80–81, 146, 154n, 168, 190–91, 205–06, 301, 307–08
Gaurī, goddess 126–27, 141, 186
form of Sarasvatī 126, 141
gaurī, fair 186
subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Gauri, Mahārāja 254
Gautama, sage 56, 125
Gautamī river 82, 82n
Gaya 103, 103n
Gāyatrī
goddess 73, 119, 121–23, 126, 128, 128n, 129, 129n, 139, 141
mantra 122–23, 125
gāyatrī metre 122
Geldner, Karl Friedrich 12n, 13n, 15n, 17n, 18n, 23n, 24n, 27, 30n, 31, 34n, 36n, 44n, 45n, 49, 64–65
general medicine 175n
Ghaggar-Hakra 4
Ghaṇṭaśāla, Andhra Pradesh xv, 228–29, 248
Ghasta(or u)hasti, teacher of Māghahasti 231–32, 232n

Ghastuhasti 232
Ghaznī, Afghanistan 263
Ghosh, Niranjan 2
gó, cow(s) 21n, 29–30, 49n, 66, 113n
See also cow(s)
goat, goddess stepping on 263n
Göbl, Robert 232
Goddess's Ford 98
See also ford(s), *tīrtha*
gods 10, 15, 23n, 25–29, 34n, 41–42, 46, 54, 65, 67n, 68–84, 86, 95, 100–01, 106–07, 111, 113n, 120n, 121, 121n, 129n, 133, 138–39, 170–71, 184, 186–87, 187n, 191–92, 192n, 203, 208, 212, 215n, 217–18, 228, 230, 237, 255, 259n, 272–73, 294, 299–300, 300n, 302, 302n, 306
See also Devas, *devāsurendraiḥ*, *devatā*
goemonburo 五右衞門風呂, Japanese bath 166
golden drum in the *Sutra of Golden Light* 146–47
golden mouth of the Buddha 208
Gonda, Jan 2, 9, 25, 25n, 26n, 27, 31n, 38–39
Gondla, Himachal Pradesh 228
Gongdetian 功德天, Lakṣmī 155, 156n
See also Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女, Kichijōten 吉祥天, Lakṣmī, Śrī
goose 133–34, 134n, 135, 135n
Brahmā on four geese 133n
Brahmā's chariot drawn by geese 133n
See also Anser indicus, *haṃsa*, *rājahaṃsa*
Gorakshakar, Sadashiv 233–34
gorocanā, cow bezoar, cow-gallstone 309
gouqi 苟杞, Chinese desert-thorn 310
gouqigen 狗杞根, Chinese desert-thorn 310
Gova, smith 231, 232n, 234
Government of Andhra Pradesh, Archaeology and Museums Department xvii
Grandfather's lake 105, 116
Grassmann, Hermann 13n, 18n, 19n, 21n
Great Bath, Mohenjo-Daro 172, 172n
Great Eloquence Deity 154, 156, 158, 160–61, 183–84, 208, 219, 277–78, 296, 298–99
See also Da Biantian 大辯天
Great Fuxian Monastery 大福先寺 153
great Goddess 126, 267–68, 210
See also Devī, Durgā
Gṛhya Sūtras 72n
Grünwedel, Albert 230, 230n
Guanding jing 灌頂經, *Book of Consecration* 180
See also Book of Consecration
Guérinot, A. 232n
guggulu, Indian bdellium 288
rasa, Indian bdellium 312
guipi 桂皮, Chinese cinnamon 311
guipidingxiang 桂皮丁香, Chinese cinnamon 311
guishen 鬼神, demons and deities 191, 284n
Gujarat xvi–xvii, 241, 244, 246, 249, 255
Gulf of Bengal 257n
Gummer, Natalie Dawn 3n, 157n, 160, 176–78
Gupta, Anand Swarup 2, 122n
Gupta period 176, 213, 233, 235–36, 246, 249, 253–56, 258, 260, 264
Guzang 姑藏, Northern Liang capital 148n

Haimavatī, name of Pārvatī, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Haḷebiḍ, Karnataka 199n
haṃsa, goose xv, 134, 134n, 135n, 229, 237, 237n, 238, 238n, 241
ability to separate milk from water 45n, 134–35
as *ātman* 134–35
mount of
Brahmā 133
Brahmāṇī 131, 229, 246
Sarasvatī 133–35, 139, 141, 199n, 229, 237, 241, 248
and Soma 134
See also Anser indicus, goose, *rājahaṃsa*
hao 好, minor marks 194, 194n, 195n, 303n, 304n
See also anuvyañjana, minor marks
Harappan medical tradition 173

Hara^{x}vaiti river 88n
Harivaṃśa 118n, 183, 183n, 184, 191, 203, 205–07, 209–15, 219–21, 251, 256–57, 274, 277
Harivaṃśa hymn, recited by Kauṇḍinya 183–84, 191, 192n, 203, 205–07, 209–12, 215, 220, 251, 256–57, 277, 299n
Harle, J. C. 252
harp 1n, 227, 227n, 228, 228n, 235, 236n
  See also bow-shaped harp, *vīṇā*
Harṣa (r. 606–47), king 255, 257
Härtel, Herbert 252–53
Haryana 4
Hastahasti 232n
Hazra, Rajendra Chandra 117, 228
healer(s) 17, 40, 56, 87, 140, 173–74, 174n
healing of illness 23, 40–41, 44, 46–47, 54, 90, 169, 172–76, 181–82, 219, 271, 273
  See also Āyurveda, Chinese medical practices, empirico-rational healing, Harappan medical tradition, Indian medical history, medical science, medicaments/medicine/remedies, pharmaceutical knowledge, pharmacopoeia, Vedic magico-religious healing
Heaven 40, 40n, 64, 64n, 65, 67
Hebu Jinguangming jing 合部金光明經, edition of the *Sutra of Golden Light* by Baogui 149, 149n
  See also under Sutra of Golden Light, Baogui edition
Heesterman, J. C. 178, 178n
hehuan 合歡, mimosa 309
hehunshu 合昏樹, mimosa 309
Hemacandra, author of *Abhidhāna Cintāmaṇi* 245
hemlock parsley 310
herbs 3n, 98, 162–63, 163n, 164, 164n, 166, 172–73, 176–77, 177n, 179, 179n, 181–82, 277, 283, 285, 285n, 289n, 297, 309n
  See also auṣadhi, cao 草, *naluotuocao* 那羅陀草, *oṣadhi*
heroine of Sanskrit drama 72n
  See also nāyikā
heterodox ascetic renunciants 174–76
highest perfect awakening 161, 171–72, 206, 282
  See also anuttara samyak sambodhi
Hillebrandt, Alfred 2, 16n, 37
Hiltebeitel, Alf 95–96, 101n, 137
Himalayan cedar 310
Himalayas 4
Himavant, Himalayan mountain, father of Pārvatī 103, 170–71, 186
Hiṅgulā, one with a vermillion mark on her forehead 188
Hiraṇyakaśipu, demon 198, 200
hiraṇyavartani, golden-tracked 48, 48n
Hoffmann, Karl 12n
Hokkedō 法華堂 at Tōdaiji 東大寺, Nara, Japan xviii, 1, 275
hong shiyuan 弘誓願, great vow 168, 291
hook, implement 258, 259n
  carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 259n
Hopkins, E. Washburn 2
horn of plenty, implement xv, 235–36
  carried by
    female on coins xv, 235–36
    Lakṣmī on Gupta coins 236n, 237
horse sacrifice. *See* Aśvamedha
Hosaholalu, Mandya, Karnataka 199n
hot water spell 167–69, 290
  See also tangzhou 湯呪
hótar priest 24, 43n, 54
hótrā bhā́ratī 24, 24n, 25, 25n, 35
  See also Bhāratī
Houston, Texas xvi, 238–40, 249
hui fan gai 繪幡蓋, pictures, banners, and parasols 286–87, 287n
huicai 繪綵, picture designs 165n, 166n, 288, 288n
Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), author of *Biographies of Eminent Monks* 150
humours of the body 175
Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art. *See* The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art
huoxiang 藿香, *Pogostemon* 312
Hurvitz, Leon 185, 304n
hushenzhou 護身呪, body-protecting spell 169, 292

  See also body-protecting spell
hyacinth orchid 310
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh xvii
hydrotherapy 173, 176

ibex, goddess stepping on 263n
Iḍā. *See* Iḷā
Ikari Yasuke 井狩弥介 72n, 80n, 81n
Iḷā/Iḍā, sacrificial goddess 11, 14, 24, 24n, 25–26, 38, 43, 43n, 51, 87, 89
Ilango Adigal, author of *Śilappadigāram* 262n
incantation(s) 46, 74n, 157, 160, 162, 164, 173, 212
  See also charm(s), *dhāraṇī*, mantra(s), spell(s), *zhou* 呪
incense 165, 288, 288n, 312n
  Indian bdellium 288
  of the Parthians or Arsacides 288, 288n, 312n
  sweetgum 288
India 1, 9–10, 12n, 20, 47n, 95, 117, 134, 150–51, 153–54, 157, 175, 177n, 200, 212, 227, 251, 254–59, 264, 266–67, 269, 274–75
Indian bdellium 288, 312
Indian medical history 174
Indian Museum, Kolkata xv–xvi, 199n, 227, 235n, 238, 241, 248, 252, 267n
Indian olibanum 311
Indo-Tibetan Buddhism 165n, 180n
Indonesia xviii, 263
Indra 22n, 24n, 28–30, 32, 32n, 34n, 37, 40, 40n, 41, 44–52, 54, 54n, 55, 55n, 56, 82, 82n, 87, 90, 106–07, 109–10, 120n, 130, 141, 172, 176, 189, 199, 203, 214, 228, 255–56, 306
  consort Sarasvatī 51–52, 141
  healed by Sarasvatī and the Aśvins. *See* Sautrāmaṇī ritual/sacrifice
  Indra as ram 54, 54n, 55
  pávīrava, his thunderbolt 49, 49n
  Śakra 55–56, 203, 306
  vajra 255
  See also Dishi 帝釋, Śakra
indrahastā, hyacinth orchid 310, 310n
índu, drop 65n
Indus river 18, 88n
infirmaries in Buddhist monasteries 175
Ingholt, Harald 230
initiation 180
inspired thought 11, 15, 26–35, 37, 42, 60, 87, 89, 271
  See also dhī́
Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University 72n
ironwood 314
irreversible stage 161, 282
  See also avaivartika
Ishtar, goddess 213n
Isiyā, nun 242–43
iṣṭi, offering 58, 127, 127n
Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO) 107n

Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 10, 55, 65, 67, 70–71, 84n
Jain, Jyoti Prasad 233n, 234–35
Jain Sarasvatī 2, 5, 107, 134n, 226, 226n, 231, 241, 248–50, 269, 271, 273
  peacock mount 134n, 248n
  See also Śrutadevatā, Śrutadevī
Jaipur, Rajasthan 252n
Jakarta, Indonesia xviii, 263
Jalavāhana, son of the merchant Jaṭiṃdhara, *Sutra of Golden Light* 175
Jambudvīpa 160n, 280
Jamison, Stephanie 55, 63–64, 64n
Janaka, king 60
Janamejaya, king of Hastināpura 99, 100n, 101–02
Japan xviii, 1, 152, 215, 230n, 266–67, 274–75
Jaṭiṃdhara, father of Jalavāhana, *Sutra of Golden Light* 175
Java, Indonesia xviii, 263
jewel, implement 267n, 268
  carried by
    Uga-Benzaiten 267n
    Vajrasarasvatī 268
Jianlaodishen 堅牢地神, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī 155, 156n
  See also Da Dishennü 大地神女, Dishen 地神, Dishen Jianlao 地神堅牢, Dṛḍhā Pṛthivī, Earth Deity
jianxiang 煎香 311, 311n
Jiaochenru 憍陳如, Kauṇḍinya 298n
  See also Kauṇḍinya
Jiecha, corresponding to Malaysia 257n

jiejie 結界, boundaries tying 166, 166n, 289n
See also sīmābandha
jiejiezhou 結界呪, boundaries-tying spell 166n, 289
See also boundaries-tying spell
jieluosuo 揭羅娑 315n
jiezi 芥子, sarhya mustard, yellow sarson 314
Jina images 233
Jinamitra, ninth-century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 149
jingangchu 金剛杵, vajra 305n
Jingguang 淨光, Vimalaprabhā, goddess with whom Empress Wu was identified 153n
jingjin 精進, progression of energy 185, 185n
Jinguangming jing 金光明經, Dharmakṣema's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 148
See also under Sutra of Golden Light, Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation
Jinguangming zuishengwang jing 金光明最勝王經, Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 149
See also under Sutra of Golden Light, Yijing's Chinese translation
Jīvabhogin, sixth-century author of *Darśanajyotis* 248n
jixiang 吉祥, auspiciousness 303n
jñāmaka 310
Jñānagupta (523–600), Shenajueduo 闍那崛多 149, 149n
Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. *See under Sutra of Golden Light*, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese translation
Jñānakumāra, eighth-century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 149
The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art xvi
Junagadh inscription 236, 236n
Juntei Kannon 准胝觀音, Cuṇḍī Avalokiteśvara 264

Kabul, Afghanistan xviii, 262, 262n
Kabul river 10
kacchapī vīṇā, pear-shaped lute 1n, 230n
See also lute, *vīṇā*
Kailāsa, mount, abode of Śiva 131n, 186
Kailāsanāth Temple, Ellorā, Maharashtra xvii, 262n
Kaiyuan Shijiao lu 開元釋教錄 by Zhisheng 智昇 (d. after 730) 149n
Kākhordas, poisonous-worm producing demons 283–84, 284n, 294–95, 295n
Kākutstha, epithet of the kings of the solar dynasty 56
kalaśa jars 179n
kalaśābhiṣeka, *kalaśa* jar *abhiṣeka* 179n
kālī, dark 186
kalpa, one day of Brahmā 129n
Kalyāṇī, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Kāma, god 121, 244n
kamaṇḍalu, water pot 129, 131–33, 246
See also water pot
Kambala, brother of Nāga king Aśvatara 130–31, 131n
kami 神, Shinto deity 266n
See also Ugajin 宇賀神
Kāñcanākṣī river 102–03, 103n, 122
Kaniṣka, king 232–33
Kaniṣka I, king 253
Kaniṣka III, king 253
Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā, near Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh xv, 107, 107n, 231, 233, 243, 248–49, 269
Kantawala, S. G. 63, 64n
Kaṇva, ancestor of Medhyātithi 54
Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā 9, 57, 72, 75–77, 78n, 79
Karaṭā, one of low profession (?) 189
Karnataka xvii, 199n, 260–61
karpūra, Borneo camphor tree 315, 315n
Kārttikeya, Skanda 237
peacock mount 237
See also Kumāra, Skanda
kārú, poet 34
Kashmir 118

Kāśyapa Mātaṅga (first century), She Moteng 攝摩騰 150, 150n, 151–52, 152n
Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra 81
Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā 9, 57–58, 61, 72, 75–76, 76n, 77, 78n, 79
Kātyāyanī, name of Pārvatī 255
Kaufmann, Walter 227n
Kauṇḍinya, Brahman 154, 154n, 183–85, 187, 190–92, 195–96, 199, 201–06, 208–09, 209n, 211, 213, 216–20, 251, 273–74, 277, 298, 298n, 301, 307n
See also Jiaochenru 憍陳如
Kauśikī, born from the sloughed dark skin of Pārvatī 186, 186n, 200, 200n, 201, 207, 212–15, 220, 251, 264–65
Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 186n, 200, 200n, 207, 212–15, 251, 264–65
carrying
bow 200, 251, 258, 264
quivers of arrows 200, 251, 258, 264
eight-armed 212, 220, 251, 258, 264–65
lion mount 212
wearing armour 212
wielding weapons 200, 212, 220, 251, 258, 264
See also Kauśikī, Vindhyavāsinī
Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 10, 67, 71–72, 86
Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad 120n
Kavaṣa Ailūṣa 85–86
kaví, chanter 32n, 173
Keith, Arthur Berriedale 2, 15n, 16n, 37, 71n, 78
Kerala 288n
ketú, ensign 12, 12n, 28
key, implement 267n
carried by Uga-Benzaiten 267n
Keyūrā 189
Keyūramatī, one wearing an upper-arm bracelet 189
Khajurāho, Madhya Pradesh 248n
Khan, Mohammed Israil 2, 24n, 38
Khyāti, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Kichijōten 吉祥天, Lakṣmī 1
See also Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女, Gongdetian 功德天, Lakṣmī, Śrī
Kielhorn, Franz 58n
kingdom/state protection 147, 151–52, 152n, 181–82, 196, 215, 219, 265–66, 273
Knobl, Werner xi, 12n, 18n, 31, 44n
knowledge 1, 108, 111, 114, 125, 127, 130, 138, 140–41, 159, 161–62, 171, 183, 190, 193, 195–96, 212, 219, 226, 230, 245, 249, 272–73, 279, 281, 302, 304
See also ming 明
Koezuka Takashi xi, xv, xvii–xviii, 265n
Koḷeya *gaṇa* 231–32, 232n
Kolkata xv–xvi, 199n, 227, 235n, 238, 241, 252, 267n
Korean mint 312n
Kosala 10, 103, 103n
Koteswar, Banaskantha District, Gujarat xvii, 246
Koṭika *gaṇa* 232n
See also Koḷeya *gaṇa*
Kṛṣṇa, incarnation of Viṣṇu 100, 116n, 183n, 210–11
Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda 10
See also Black (*Kṛṣṇa*) *Yajur Veda*
Kṣatriya(s), class 10, 95, 254, 266
Kühn, Ingrid 73n
Kuiper, F. B. J. 19n, 72n
kula, spiritual lineage 231–32, 232n
Kuliśī river 50, 50n
Kumāra, Kārttikeya 237
See also Kārttikeya, Skanda
Kumāragupta I (ca. 415–50), king 235n, 237
Kumārajīva (344–413) 185, 304n
kuṅkuma, saffron 313, 314n
Kuru(s) 85, 87, 89–90, 271
king(s) 9–10, 103
Kurukṣetra 85, 89, 95, 101n, 103, 103n
kuśa grass 179
Kuṣāṇa period 107, 213, 213n, 236, 236n, 252, 252n, 253–54, 259, 264
kuṣṭha, crepe ginger 313
Kuwayama Shoshin 262n, 263n
Kyoto 133n, 226n
Kyōto Daigaku Jinbunkagaku Kenkyūjo 京都大学人文科学研究所 72n

Kyoto University 京都大学 xi, 248n

Laevocamphor 312
Lahore Museum, Pakistan 230
lakṣaṇa, distinguishing marks on Buddha's body 194, 194n, 208, 217
See also marks, *xiang* 相
Lakṣmī 1, 126–27, 141, 236, 236n, 237, 237n, 238, 245
carrying
fillet on Gupta coins 236n, 237
on Candragupta coin 237
horn of plenty on Gupta coins 236n, 237
lotus 237
divine consort of the king 236
See also Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女, Gongdetian 功德天, Kichijōten 吉祥天, Śrī
Lakṣmī-Narasiṃha Temple of Hosaholalu, Mandya, Karnataka 199n
lalitāsana, playful posture 239, 241
lance, implement 260
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 260
See also spear
Landsat imagery 19
lasso, implement 197, 258, 267n, 305
carried by Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 267n, 305
See also noose
Law, Dharma, Buddhism 146, 158, 158n, 160n, 163, 185, 211, 218, 265, 278–80, 283–85, 287, 294, 298
Law, Dharma, Hinduism 113, 124
lebbek 309
leguminous tree of dry land 310
Lévi, Sylvain 61, 153
Lidai sanbao ji 歷代三寶記 (presented to the court in 598) by Fei Zhangfang 費長房 149n, 151, 151n, 152
Light, *jyotis* 130
Lingen, Jan xv
Lingen Collection, The Netherlands xv, 235n
linglingxiang 零陵(凌)香, yellow sweet clover 312
lion(s) 195–99, 201, 207, 212, 230, 237n, 252n, 254, 258–61, 263, 267, 305
among beasts 196–99, 207, 259, 305
among men 197
chariot of Bhramaramātā drawn by lions 254
mount of
Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 212
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 197–98, 252n, 253n, 258–61, 263
Vāgīśvarī 267
vīṇā-player 230
shizi 師子 197n
throne 259
vehicle for men 195
and warrior-ruler 199
lionesses 197, 197n, 198, 207, 305
Liquidambar formosana 311
resin 311
local flora 173–74, 174n
van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, Johanna Engelberta 231n, 232, 232n, 233–34
Lomaśa, sage 101
Lommel, Hermann 19
long-leaved Indian pine resin 311
long-necked plucked lute, *Sarasvatī vīṇā* 1n, 230n
See also lute, *vīṇā*
longhua 龍華, ironwood 314
longhuaxu 龍花鬚, ironwood 314
Lophanthus rugosus 312n
Lord of Cattle 68–69
See also Paśupati
Lord of Speech
Vācaspati 61
Vāgīśa 268
See also Vācaspati, Vāgīśa
Lord of the Pressing Stone 54
Lord of the Sacrificial Ground 65
See also vāstoṣ páti
'lost' Sarasvatī 4
See also under Sarasvatī, river
lotus, implement 200, 229, 233–34, 234n, 237, 240–44, 247–48, 268
carried by
Hindu Sarasvatī 229, 240–41, 248
Jain Sarasvatī 233–34, 242–44, 247
Lakṣmī 237
Vajrasarasvatī 268
lotus garland 252, 252n, 259–60
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252, 252n, 259–60
Lotus Sutra 185–86, 304n
See also Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經
louban 漏版, leaking plank 166, 166n, 289n
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh xv–xvi, 231, 238, 240, 248–50
Lüders, Heinrich 12n, 18n, 19–20, 231n, 232n
Ludwig, Alfred 13n, 18n, 21n, 49
Luo Zhufeng 304n
Luoyang 153n, 257n
lute 1n, 131, 131n, 227, 227n, 228n, 230, 230n
See also biwa 琵琶, *kacchapī vīṇā*, long-necked plucked lute, pear-shaped lute, *Sarasvatī vīṇā*, *vīṇā*
Lycium chinense 310

Macdonell, Arthur Anthony 2, 15n, 16n, 18n, 21n, 23, 23n, 35n, 37, 63
mace, implement 200
carried by Narasiṃha 200
Mackay, Ernest 172n
Madhya Pradesh xv, xvii, 227, 253
Mādhyama seers 86
Māghahasti, pupil of Ghastahasti 231–32
Māghuhasti 232
magico-religious healing. *See* Vedic magico-religious healing
Mahābalipuram (Māmallapuram), Tamil Nadu xvii, 261–62, 262n, 264, 265n
Mahābhāgā, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
mahābhāgā, musk 310
Mahābhārata 3–4, 11n, 74n, 95–116, 118, 118n, 120n, 122–23, 126, 136, 138–40, 183n, 212, 215n, 249, 254, 271–72
mahābhūta, great elements 175n
mahādevī sarasvatī in Chinese 157
See also sarasvatī mahādevī in Chinese
Mahāmānasī, one of the sixteen Jain Vidyādevīs 245
Mahāmāyurī, goddess 247n
Mahāmegha Sūtra, Great Cloud Sutra 153, 153n
mahānagnī, pre-pubescent goddess 77–78, 83
Maharashtra xvii, 10, 262n
mahātapas, great *tapas* 101n, 104, 109n, 184–85, 185n, 186, 206, 211, 298
See also ascetic practices, austerities, *tapas*
Mahāvairocana Sūtra 157n
See also Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經
Mahāvidyā, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Mahāvidyās, group of ten goddesses 268
See also Bagalāmukhī, Bhairavī Devī
Mahāvīra 233
Mahāvīrasvāmī temple, Pindawara 244
Mahāyāna sutras 151–52
Mahīdhara, commentator 45n, 54n
Mahiṣa, buffalo-demon 197, 213, 254–56, 258, 261, 261n, 263, 265
Mahiṣāsura sainyavadha, slaying of the armies of Mahiṣa 261, 262n
Mahiṣāsuramardinī xvii–xviii, 170, 170n, 197, 197n, 198, 200–01, 207, 210, 213, 213n, 214–16, 220–21, 225, 251–67, 269, 274
carrying
arrows 258, 260–61, 263, 265
axe 258, 259n, 265
bell 254, 258, 259n, 260–62, 262n
bow 258, 260–63, 265
conch 259n, 260–63
cup 262
hook 258, 259n
lance 260
lotus garland 252, 252n, 259–60
moon 259
noose 258, 261, 262n, 265
parrot 260, 262
shield 252, 252n, 258, 260–62
spear 253n, 258–59, 265
staff 259n
sun 259
sword 254, 258, 260–63, 265

trident 252–53, 253n, 254–56, 258–61, 263, 265
vajra 252n, 259n, 260, 263, 265, 265n
wheel 258, 260–63, 265
eight-armed xvii–xviii, 200, 213–14, 251, 258–66, 269, 274
four-armed 252, 252n, 259, 263
lion mount 197–98, 252n, 253n, 258–61, 263, 267
six-armed 252
standing on the head of the buffalo 262, 262n, 264
types of images
Gupta period 213, 253–60, 264
Kuṣāṇa period 213, 213n, 252–54, 259, 264
wielding weapons 200, 225, 251, 253–55, 258–59, 266, 269, 274
Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa, Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu xvii, 261–62, 262n, 265n
Maina bird 53
Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā 9, 57, 59, 65, 67–69, 71–77, 79, 81, 90, 90n
makara, marine monster 244, 244n, 245, 247
mount of
Gaṅgā 247
South Indian *vīṇā*-playing goddess 245
mālā, garland 132
Malayan camphor 312
Malaysia 257n
malevolent forces 173, 180
Mallikārjuna Temple, Paṭṭadakal, Karnataka 261, 262n
de Mallmann, Marie-Thérèse 133, 170n
Māmallapuram (Mahābalipuram), Tamil Nadu 261
See also Mahābalipuram
manaḥśilā, red arsenic sulfide 309n, 313
mánas, thought, mind 27, 27n, 32n, 33–34, 42, 46, 46n, 66, 71, 101n, 103n, 116n, 124n, 131n
See also mind
Mānasahṛdā river 102–03, 122
maṇḍala, circle, delimited sacred space, division of the *Ṛg Veda* 9, 146, 165, 165n, 180–81, 278, 286, 286n
Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 37n
Maṅgusā, she-mongoose 188–89
maṇi jewel 193, 302
Maṅkaṇaka, sage 103–04
manoyúja, mind-yoked 27n, 42
mantra(s) 59–60, 90, 122–23, 125, 162, 170–72, 175, 176n, 178, 179n, 180, 182, 187–89, 283–85, 289, 289n, 290, 296
See also incantation(s), spell(s), *zhou* 呪
Manu, primal man 14, 116, 116n, 121, 121n, 128, 139
Manu Smṛti 122, 134n
manuscript/book, carried by Sarasvatī 5, 128, 131, 131n, 132, 139, 141, 199n, 216, 229, 229n, 231, 233–34, 239, 241–45, 247–50, 269, 271, 273, 275
See also pusta/pustaka
maogexiang 茅根香, oil plant 314
maoxiang 茅香, oil plant 314n
maqin 馬芹 314
Māra, Buddhist tempter 188
Marcel-Dubois, Claudie 227
Mārīcī, Buddhist goddess 188, 188n, 189–90, 264, 264n
See also Molizhi 摩利支
Mārīcī dhāraṇī 190
See also Molizhi tian tuoluoni zhou jing 摩利支天陀羅尼呪經
Mārkaṇḍeya, sage 115, 127n
Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 117, 119n, 127–28, 130, 138, 140, 249, 272
marks on Buddha's body 194–95, 303–04
See also lakṣaṇa, xiang 相
Marshall, Sir John 172n
Maruts, Storm Gods 11, 21–22, 22n, 23, 23n, 26, 29, 38, 48, 104
See also Storm Gods
Master of the Law (Dharma) 185, 211, 278–80
Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh xvi–xvii, 107, 231, 231n, 233, 238, 241, 248–49, 252, 252n, 253, 259–60
Mati, goddess, form of Sarasvatī 126
mati, intelligence, resolve 126, 128, 128n, 129, 299n
Matinārā, sage 116, 116n, 139
mātṛgrāma, women 192, 301

Mātṛ(kā)s, Mothers 198, 213n, 246–47, 247n, 250
See also Mothers, animal-headed women
Matsya, Fish incarnation of Viṣṇu 121, 128
Matsya Purāṇa 63, 64n, 72, 82n, 117–22, 126–33, 138–40, 179n, 198, 228–29, 239, 246–47, 250, 258, 258n, 259, 259n, 261n, 273
Maue, Dieter 163, 309n, 310n, 312n, 315n
Maukharīs 255
May, Jacques 152n
māyā, illusion, magic 76, 76n, 210
Medhā, goddess, intelligence 126–27
form of Sarasvatī 126
subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Medhātithi 55
See also Medhyātithi
Medhyātithi, descendant of Kaṇva 54
See also Medhātithi
Medicago sativa 309
medical epistemology 174
medical science taught at Buddhist monastic universities 175
medicaments/medicine/remedies 17, 23, 23n, 47, 54, 171–77, 180–81, 219, 273, 283, 285, 297
See also Āyurveda, Chinese medical practices, empirico-rational healing, Harappan medical tradition, healing of illness, Indian medical history, medical science, pharmaceutical knowledge, pharmacopoeia, Vedic magico-religious healing
Melilotus officinalis 312n
memory/remembering/remembrance 158–59, 159n, 161, 183, 195–96, 196n, 199, 201, 207, 210, 212, 214, 219, 273–74, 279–80, 304–05, 305n
See also smṛti
meṣá, ram 54, 54n, 55, 55n, 56
See also ram
meṣī́, ewe, offered to Sarasvatī 53–54, 58, 58n
See also ewe
Mesua ferrea 314
miao yan 妙言, wonderful words 187
Miaofa lianhua jing 妙法蓮華經, Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of the *Lotus Sutra* 185
See also Lotus Sutra
milk 14n, 24n, 29, 29n, 30–34, 45, 45n, 50–51, 59, 114n, 129, 134–35, 165n, 179, 179n, 287
See also páyas
Milky Way 13, 85
mimosa 309
mind 27n, 33–34, 42, 57, 66, 71, 116n
See also mánas
ming 明, knowledge 299n
See also knowledge
Miṅgulā 188
Miṅgulavatī 188–89
minor marks on Buddha's body 194–95, 303–04
See also anuvyañjana, hao 好
mirrors 166, 289
Mitra, one of the Ādityas 28–29, 41, 41n
von Mitterwallner, Gritli 252n, 253
mógha, deceptive 79, 107
Mohenjo-Daro 172, 229n
Molizhi 摩利支, Mārīcī 190, 264
See also Mārīcī
Molizhi tian tuoluoni zhou jing 摩利支天陀羅尼呪經 190
See also Mārīcī dhāraṇī
Monier-Williams, Monier 16n
Mookerji, Radha Kumud 235, 235n
Moon 130, 168, 168n, 169, 180, 292
See also Candramas
moon, carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 259
Morohashi Tetsuji 165n, 286n
Moschus 310
Mothers 198, 213, 213n, 246
See also animal-headed women, Mātṛ(kā)s
mṛt-snāna, bath with various types of earth 178
mudrā, hand gesture 233–34, 248, 262
abhaya, no fear 234, 233n, 262
varada, boon-giving 233n, 234, 248
vyākhyāna, teaching 233n, 234
Mūlaśoka, eighth-century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 149

Mus, Paul 180, 180n
Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, Rome 262
Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara xvi–xvii, 242, 246, 248
Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin xvii, 259
Museum Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta xviii, 263
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston xvi, 238–40, 249
music 1, 36, 36n, 84, 127, 130, 138, 140–41, 230, 235, 235n, 239, 241, 249–50, 271–73
musk 310
musta, nut grass 313
mustard seed 314
musuxiang 苜蓿香, alfalfa 309

Nag Publishers 131n, 247n
Nāga(s) 127n, 130, 130n, 131, 131n, 180, 180n, 208, 212, 218
nāgakesara, ironwood 314
Nagar, Jaipur Unit 252n
Nāgārjunī Hill 255
Nagasaki Hōjun 226n, 234n
nagnikā, pre-pubescent girl 78
Nāgodbheda 98, 98n
Nāhuṣa 14n
Naimiṣa forest 98, 103, 103n
Naimiṣeya seers (*ṛṣi*) 96, 98n, 99, 136, 272
Nakamura Hajime 286n, 304n
nalada, spike-nard 310n, 314
  See also spike-nard
Nālandā monastic university 175, 256
naluotuocao 那羅陀草, *nalada* herb 310n, 314
Naluoyan 那羅延, Nārāyaṇī 211
Namuci, demon 45, 45n
Namucī 188–89
Nanda, cowherd 211
Nara, Japan xviii, 1, 267, 275
Nara river, Sind 4
Nārada, sage 82, 101, 112, 123–24, 124n
Narasiṃha, man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu 198, 198n, 200, 200n
  carrying
    conch 200
    disc 200
    mace 200
    shield 200
    sword 200
  eight-armed 198, 200
  wielding weapons 200
  See also Nṛsiṃha
Nārasiṃhī, one of the Mothers, name of the great Warrior Goddess 198, 198n
naravāhana, vehicle for man/men 197–98, 200–01, 304
Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu 112
Narayana Rao, Velcheru 95, 95n
Nārāyaṇī, spouse of Nārāyaṇa 211
Nardostachys 310, 310n
Nardostachys jatamansi 314
Narmadā river 117
National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul xviii, 262, 262n
National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh 263
National Museum of India, New Delhi 235n, 265
nāyikā, heroine of Sanskrit drama 72n
  See also heroine of Sanskrit drama
néṣṭar priest 43n, 56n
New Delhi 235n, 265
New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments, edited by Sadie 288n
Nidrā, Sleep 210, 214, 274
Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī 210, 274
  carrying a trident, Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī as Biancaitian 211
  daughter of cowherd Nanda 211
  younger sister of Kṛṣṇa 211
  See also Nidrā, Vindhyavāsinī
Niṣādas, tribe 98–99, 136, 272
Nisumbha, demon 213
niuhuang 牛黄, cow bezoar, cow-gallstone 309, 309n
nivid, invitation formula 62n, 63n
Nobel, Johannes 145n, 146–49, 150n, 153, 153n, 154, 158n, 159n, 163, 165n, 166, 166n, 170n, 189n, 190, 196n, 207, 209n, 278n, 279n, 281n, 284n, 287n, 288n, 289n, 292n, 294n, 298n, 299n, 301n, 303n, 304n, 305n, 306n, 307n, 309n, 310n, 311n, 312n, 314n, 315n
noose, implement 199n, 229n, 258, 261, 262n, 265

  carried by
    Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 261, 262n, 265
    Sarasvatī 199
  See also lasso
Northern Liang dynasty (397–439) 148n
Northern Zhou dynasty (557–81) 149n
Nṛsiṃha, Narasiṃha 198
  See also Narasiṃha
nut grass 313

obstacles 48, 138, 162, 265, 284, 293, 295
obstetrics 175n
Ocimum basilicum 312
Oda Tokuno 304n
offerings 14, 24, 24n, 26n, 35, 45, 54, 57–58, 113–15, 129, 140, 168, 208, 213n, 288
Oghavatī river 102–03, 103n, 122
Oguibénine, Boris 16n
oil plant 314
Oldenberg, Hermann 18n, 37, 37n, 64–65
Olibanum, frankincense 315n
Om syllable 36n, 37n, 112, 130, 130n
oppressions 162, 168, 171, 171n, 179–80, 284, 293, 295
Orissa 255
oṣadhi, medicinal herbs 179
  See also auṣadhi, herbs
Osaka University 大阪大学 xi–xii, 265n
Ōtani University 大谷大学 226n

pāda, foot/quarter of a stanza 21, 113n, 195–98, 201
Pakistan 4, 107, 157
Pal, Yash 4
Palace Chapel, Luoyang 153n
Palekhera, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh 252
Pali literature 175
Pallava(s) 261–62
palm (*chi* 尺), measurement 165n, 286n
Pan-Asian Collection 238
páñca jātā́, five generations 15n
Pañcālas 10
Pañcaśikha, Gandharva 228, 228n
  playing the *vīṇā* 228
pañcatūrya nāda, instrumental ensemble for courtly music 288n
pañcavādya, 'five instruments' of Kerala 288n
Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa 10, 61–62, 66–67, 69–70, 84, 88, 97, 100, 136–37, 271–72
Pāṇḍava(s) 97, 99n
  See also Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira
Panjab 4, 9–10, 118
paramahaṃsa 135n
Paramārtha (500–69), Boluomotuo 波羅末陀 149
parasols 165n, 212, 287n, 288
pārāvataghnī́, slayer of strangers 15, 15n
Pārāvatas 16n
Pargiter, Frederick Eden 117
Parisāraka, place where the Sarasvatī river flowed around Kavaṣa Ailūṣa 86
parivarta, chapter 145, 155, 205
  See also pin 品
Parpola, Asko 213n
parrot, carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 260, 262
Parthians 288n, 312n
pā́rthiva, earthly 41n
Pārvatī 170–71, 186, 186n, 200–01, 206–07, 210–15, 220–21, 251, 256, 258, 265, 274
  ascetic practices 186, 186n, 206–07, 211, 213–14, 220, 251, 256, 258, 265, 273
  daughter of Himavant 171, 186
Paśupati, Lord of Cattle 65–70
Pātālā, epithet of Durgā, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Pātāla, hell 131, 131n
patchouli 312n
patra 312
Paṭṭadakal, Karnataka 261, 262n
Pavamāna Soma 27n
pávīrava, Indra's thunderbolt 49, 49n
pávīravī kanyā̀ 49–52
Pavīru, lightning 49
páyas, milk, any kind of fluid 12, 12n, 14n, 24, 24n, 29, 29n, 30–31, 34, 50–51
  See also milk
peacock 134, 134n, 237, 237n, 238,

248n
mount of
Kārttikeya/Kumāra 237
Sarasvatī 134, 134n, 248n
pear-shaped lute, *kacchapī vīṇā* 1n, 230n
See also lute, *vīṇā*
pediatrics 175n
pen, implement 233
Peshawar Museum, Pakistan 230n
phalastuti stanza, outlining benefits 204
pharmaceutical knowledge, Indian 173n
pharmacopoeia 163
Phnom Penh, Cambodia 263
physicians/healers 44, 46–47, 52, 176
pilgrimage, *tīrthayātrā* 87, 97, 100–01, 101n 102, 123, 137, 271
pin 品, chapter 148–49, 215n, 216n
See also parivarta
pincers, carried by Vāgīśvarī 267
Pindawara 244
Pinus longifolia resin 311
Pinus massoniana 311
pinwheel flower 312
Piper chaba 314
pitāmaha, paternal grandfather, Brahmā 105, 116, 123n, 128
See also Brahmā
pitṛ, Fathers, ancestors 56, 82
See also Fathers
place of the way 165, 165n, 166, 286n, 287, 289, 294
See also daochang 道場
Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa, source of the Sarasvatī river 84–85, 89, 97, 97n, 116, 130, 136–37, 271
See also Plakṣāvataraṇa
Plakṣāvataraṇa, source of the Sarasvatī river 130, 130n
See also Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa
plant-divinities 173, 173n
plants 41n, 173–74, 174n, 178
Pogostemon 312, 312n
Pogostemon vestitum 312
polügao 婆律膏, Borneo camphor tree 315, 315n
post-Gupta period 198, 200, 260, 261n
pótar priest 43n
Prabhā, goddess, brilliance 126
form of Sarasvatī 126
Prabhāsa, place where the Sarasvatī river empties into the sea 98, 101n, 136
Prajāpati 52, 60–72, 87, 90–91, 116, 118, 119n, 120n, 122, 139, 141, 176, 178, 212, 272
daughter/consort
Dyaus 66–68
Uṣas 66–67, 67n, 68, 70–71
Vāc 61–62, 66, 87, 90–91, 116, 139, 141, 272
See also Shijianzhu 世間主
Prajñā, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Prambanan, Java 263
prāṇa, exhalation, breath, life 36n, 40, 40n, 46, 46n, 188
praśastár priest 43n
Praśnavyākaraṇa 248n
pratibhāna, light 278n
prātimokṣa, Vinaya rules 146
Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhra 245n
Pratiṣṭhātilaka 245n
Pratyekabuddhas 217
pravarottamāgradevī, supreme, chief, excellent goddess 192, 202n, 301
Prayāga, Allahabad 1
Priestley, L. C. D. C. 104n, 119n
priyaṃ dhāma, dear abode 86, 86n
Prosopis spicigera 310, 310n
protection of the state. *See* kingdom/state protection
pṛśanī, pṛśanyà, touching 64, 64n, 65, 65n
Pṛśni, a cow, mother of the Maruts 21n
Pulastya, sage 101
Pulindas, tribe 211
púr, rampart 15n
Purāṇas 3–4, 35, 63, 72, 87n, 91, 95–96, 98, 102, 106, 111, 116–18, 118n, 119n, 127, 133, 136–40, 179n, 226, 238, 248–49, 271–73
puróhita priest 43n, 179n
Pūrus 14
puruṣa, servant/slave 10
Pūṣan, Vedic deity 2, 22n, 38
Puṣkara 103, 103n
pusta/pustaka, book, carried by Sarasvatī 129, 132, 247

See also manuscript/book
Puṣṭi, goddess, prosperity 105, 126
form of Sarasvatī 105, 126
Puṣya constellation 164, 179–80, 285
See also yonggui 用鬼
puṣya-snāna, bath at time of Puṣya constellation 179, 179n, 180

qingmu 青木, *Aristolochia recurvilabra* 313
qingmuxiang 青木香, *Aristolochia recurvilabra* 313
qiongqiong 芎藭, hemlock parsley 310
quarrels 162, 284, 295

Rāghava, descendant of Raghu, especially Rāma 56
rājahaṃsa, royal goose 134, 238
Rājakhera, Agra District, Uttar Pradesh 252
rājalīlā, royal ease 237
rājan, chieftains 10
rājanya, nobility 10
rājarṣi, royal seer 103n
Rajasthan 4, 244, 249, 252n, 254
Rājasūya, royal consecration ceremony 57, 178, 178n
Rajputana Museum, Ajmer, Rajasthan 247
Rākā, goddess 50, 50n
Rākṣasas, demons 109n
See also demons
ram 55–56
Indra as ram 54, 54n, 55
mount of Sarasvatī 56, 134, 134n
offered to Sarasvatī 45n, 53–54, 56
See also meṣá
Rāma, incarnation of Viṣṇu 134n
Rāmāyaṇa 55, 134n, 212
Ramghat, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh 260
Rann of Kutch 4
Ratnamegha Sūtra 153n
Rāvaṇa Phadi Cave, Aihole, Karnataka 260
Raven, Ellen 236–37
Ṛbhus, name of three semi-divine beings 50, 50n
See also Vibhvan
Rea, Alexander 229
Realgar 313
red arsenic sulfide 313
remedies. *See* medicaments/medicine
remembering. *See* memory/remembering/remembrance
remembrance. *See* memory/remembering/remembrance
Renou, Louis 12n, 13n, 16n, 17n, 18n, 20, 23n, 24, 25n, 27, 29, 30n, 33, 33n, 47, 47n, 48n, 49, 64, 64n, 65, 65n
repentance ceremony 267
Ṛg Veda 1, 3, 4, 9, 9n, 10–40, 41n, 42–52, 54, 60, 61n, 63–66, 71n, 73n, 81, 84–85, 87–88, 88n, 89, 97–98, 102–03, 106, 108, 110, 118n, 122, 134n, 136–38, 140, 172, 176n, 199, 272
Ṛg Veda Khila 25
Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden 263
ritual(s) 5, 9–10, 14, 24, 28, 33, 35, 37–38, 44–46, 55, 59, 85, 85n, 87–91, 95, 101–02, 111–12, 114, 117, 128, 137–38, 140, 154, 162, 163–65, 165n, 166, 168, 168n, 169, 171–78, 178n, 179, 179n, 180–83, 209, 219, 267, 271–73, 286n, 288n, 289n, 294, 297
See also Agnihotra sacrifice, Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, Aśvamedha (horse) sacrifice, bathing ritual, buffalo sacrifices, *puṣya-snāna*, repentance ceremony, royal consecration, sacrifices, Sārasvata sacrifices, Sarasvatī *vrata*, Sarasvatī *yātsattra*, *sattra*, Sautrāmaṇī ritual/sacrifice, Soma sacrifice, Varuṇapraghāsa ritual, *yātsattra*
rivers 11n, 12, 12n, 18n, 19–21, 23, 30–31, 33, 48–51, 97–98, 103, 108, 110, 114, 114n, 122, 136–37, 179, 244
Robert, Jean-Noël 185n, 304n
Rome 107n, 262
rosary 128, 131–32, 139, 141, 233–34, 239–41, 246–48, 250, 273
held by
Brahmāṇī 131, 246
Sarasvatī 128, 131–32, 139, 141, 233–34, 239, 241, 247–48, 250, 273
See also akṣamālā, akṣamālikā, akṣamaṇi, akṣasūtra
Roth, Rudolph 13n, 16n, 18n, 19n,

21n, 24n, 27, 49
royal consecration 166, 181, 219
Puranic 178–79, 179n
Vedic 178, 178n
royal goose 134, 238
See also rājahaṃsa
royal seer 103
See also rājarṣi
ṛṣi, seer(s) 34n, 82n, 85, 86n, 99, 100, 103n, 104, 105n, 109n
See also Brahman seer(s), *brahmarṣi*, Mādhyama seers, Naimiṣeya seers, *rājarṣi*, royal seer, seer(s), *vipra*
ṛta, truth, order 66
ru fa 如法, according to prescriptions 209
Ruciraketu, Bodhisattva, ruling family, *Sutra of Golden Light* 146, 153
Rudra 36, 36n, 63, 65, 65n, 66–70, 70n, 71
See also Bhūtapati
Rudras 26, 127
Maruts 26
subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's male half 127
Rūpyaketu, son of Ruciraketu, *Sutra of Golden Light* 153
Rūpyaprabha, son of Ruciraketu, *Sutra of Golden Light* 153
Ruyi baozhu *pin* 如意寶珠品, Chapter of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel, in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 216n

Śabaras, tribe 211
Sabarkantha District, Gujarat 246
sacrifice(s) 10, 13, 18, 23n, 24–26, 28, 43n, 45, 51, 53–56, 59, 61, 66, 67n, 70, 82, 84, 84n, 87, 89–90, 100–03, 114–16, 127–28, 137–38, 140, 178, 236n, 271–72
See also Agnihotra sacrifice, Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, Aśvamedha (horse) sacrifice, buffalo sacrifices, ritual(s), Sārasvata sacrifices, Sarasvatī *yātsattra*, *sattra*, Sautrāmaṇī ritual/sacrifice, Soma sacrifice, Varuṇapraghāsa ritual, *yātsattra*
sacrificial sessions. *See sattra*
Sahai, Bhagwant 229n
Sahni, Daya Ram 239
śaileya, dill 312, 312n
śākhā, branch from a *kula* 231–32, 232n
Śakra, Indra 55–56, 203, 306
See also Dishi 帝释, Indra
Śākyamuni Buddha 160, 165n, 188
Sal tree resin 311
śallakī, Indian olibanum 311, 311n
Śalya Parvan, *Mahābhārata* 101
Sāma Veda 9, 43, 60
Samācāradeva (ca. 550–75), king xv, 235, 237, 237n, 238, 248
Samatī 188–89
sambhoga, regional subdivision of *kula* 231–32, 232n
Sambisari, Java 263
śamī, leguminous tree of dry land 310, 310n
saṃsāra 295
See also birth-and-death cycle
Samudragupta (r. ca. 350–75), king xv, 235, 235n, 236, 236n, 248
playing the *vīṇā* on coin xv, 235
śāmyaka, Himalayan cedar 310
sandalwood 313
See also candana
sandhyā, twilight 129, 129n
Śaṇḍika chieftain 48
sandstone images xv–xvi, 231, 238–41, 248–49, 252, 263
beige xvi, 241
buff xvi, 238, 240
red xv, 231
reddish Chunar xvi, 239
Saṅgha, Buddhist community, one of the Three Jewels 189, 217
Sankânika 253n
Śaṅkara, Śiva 127
See also Śiva
Santalum album 313
saptá hótāraḥ, seven priests officiating at sacrifice 43, 43n
saptá síndhavaḥ, seven rivers 20
Saptasārasvata Tīrtha 102–04, 111, 137
saptásvasar, seven-sistered, Sarasvatī 12, 12n, 19, 21, 102, 104, 122, 136–37
Saraṇyū, daughter of Tvaṣṭar, mother of the Aśvins 21n

Sarasvant, Sarasvatī's male counterpart 11, 11n, 57, 110
Sārasvata, Sarasvatī's son 11n, 102, 109–11, 115–16, 139
Sārasvata sacrifices 100
Sārasvata Tīrtha 102, 104, 109–11
Sārasvata *vrata* 129n
See also Sarasvatī *vrata*
Sarasvatī
carrying
lotus
Hindu Sarasvatī 229, 240–41, 248
Jain Sarasvatī 233–34, 242–44, 247
manuscript/book 5, 128, 131, 131n, 132, 139, 141, 199n, 216, 229, 229n, 231, 233–34, 239, 241–45, 247–50, 269, 271, 273, 275
noose 199
rosary 128, 131–32, 139, 141, 233–34, 239, 241, 247–48, 250, 273
stick 199n
trident 132
vīṇā. *See* playing the *vīṇā here below*
water pot 128–29, 131, 131n, 132–33, 139, 239, 246–47, 250, 273
conqueror of enemies 15, 22, 48, 87, 199
consort of
the Aśvins 46, 52
Indra 51–52, 141
consort/daughter of Brahmā. *See* daughter/consort *here below*
dancing form 199n, 248, 248n
as daughter 97, 116
daughter of Pavīru/lightning 49
daughter/consort of Brahmā 52, 63, 65, 72, 82, 82n, 91, 116, 118–21, 128, 135, 139, 141, 170–71, 246–47, 250, 272–73
deity of eloquence. *See* goddess/deity of eloquence *here below*
eight-armed
dancing 248n
Sutra of Golden Light 5, 195, 197–200, 207, 214, 216, 219–20, 225–26, 251, 258–59, 264–69, 273–75
ewe offered to Sarasvatī. *See* ram/ewe offered to Sarasvatī *here below*
four-armed 128, 131–32, 139, 228–29, 238–41, 247, 248n, 273
goddess/deity of eloquence 5, 31, 154, 157, 182, 187, 190, 199, 210, 216, 219–20, 266, 273, 297
goddess of knowledge xi, 1, 4–5, 43, 83, 97, 99, 108, 111–12, 114, 132, 135, 139, 141, 182, 190, 199, 199n, 210, 214, 219, 233–35, 241–42, 245, 249–50, 266, 269, 271–75
healer/physician 40, 44, 46, 52, 56, 87, 110, 140
male counterpart Sarasvant 11, 11n, 57, 110
as mother 14–15, 18n, 20–21, 31, 37, 43, 51–52, 97, 104, 108, 110, 112, 115–16, 139, 141
mother of Sārasvata 11n, 102, 109–11, 115–16, 139
mount
haṃsa 133–35, 139, 141, 199n, 229, 237, 241, 248
peacock 134, 134n, 248n
ram 56, 134, 134n
playing the *vīṇā* 1, 73, 79, 84, 128–29, 131–33, 139, 141, 216, 228, 238–41, 247–50, 269, 271–73, 275
produced from the mind of Kṛṣṇa 116n
protector amidst enemies, *Sutra of Golden Light* 204, 307
ram/ewe offered to Sarasvatī 45n, 53–56, 58, 58n, 87, 140
river 1, 3–4, 4n, 5, 11, 13, 16, 19, 19n, 20, 25, 30, 32, 35, 37, 38, 49n, 50–52, 57–59, 84–90, 97–111, 114, 116, 122, 130, 135–38, 140, 156n, 178, 230, 247n, 250, 272
See also 'lost' Sarasvatī
river goddess xvii, 3–4, 11–16, 17n, 28, 35–36, 38, 58, 62n, 87, 109, 133, 157, 199, 214, 219, 239, 247, 250, 271, 273
seven-sistered, *saptásvasar* 12,

12n, 21
six-armed 248, 248n, 268
South Indian sculptures 199n
three Sarasvatī, *tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ* 43
as wife 97, 116, 141
wife of
Indra, Sarasvatī as river 51
Manu 116, 116n, 139
Matināra 116, 116n, 139
wielding weapons
South India 199n
Sutra of Golden Light 5, 196, 199–200, 207, 216, 220, 226, 251, 256–59, 264–69, 271, 274–75, 287
sarasvatī mahādevī in Chinese 155–56, 184, 278, 298
See also mahādevī sarasvatī in Chinese
Sarasvatī mantras 59, 90
Sarasvatī vīṇā, long-necked plucked lute of South India 1n, 230n
See also lute, *vīṇā*
Sarasvatī *vrata* 128–29, 129n
See also Sārasvata *vrata*
Sarasvatī *yātsattra* 85
sarhya mustard 314
sarjarasa, Sal tree resin 311
Sārnāth, Uttar Pradesh xvi, 226, 238–39, 248–49
Sārnāth Museum of Archaeology xvi, 239
sarocanā, *Concretio Silicea Bambusae*, Tabasheer 313
sarṣapa, mustard seed 314
Śarva, Śiva 70
See also Śiva
Ṣaṣṭhī, epithet of Kātyāyanī, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Śāstras
Buddhist textbooks 188, 282
Hindu scriptures 128, 132–33
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10, 31, 52–55, 57, 60–61, 65, 67–68, 70n, 72–74, 78–80, 84, 90n, 107, 107n, 134, 236n
Śatarūpā, produced from half of Brahmā's body 119–22, 122n
śatrumadhye, amidst enemies 204, 306–07
sattra, sacrificial sessions 70, 84–87, 89, 100, 101n, 102, 116n, 137, 140, 271
Satyavant, husband of Sāvitrī 123–24, 124n, 125
Sautrāmaṇī ritual/sacrifice 44–52, 53–54, 87, 90, 140, 172, 176, 178, 271
Savitṛ, Sun 28, 40, 122
See also Sun
Sāvitrī, goddess 119–23, 125–26, 135, 139, 141, 215, 215n, 247, 250
beauty 123, 126
knowledge 125
Sāvitrī, Satyavant story in *Mahābhārata* 123–26, 141
daughter of king Aśvapati 123
wife of Satyavant 123–24, 124n, 125
Sāvitrī (Gāyatrī) mantra 122–23, 125
Sāyaṇa, commentator 18n, 43, 43n, 50, 65
Schlerath, Bernfried 15n
Schmidt, Hanns-Peter 33, 33n
Scorretti Marble image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī 262, 262n, 263
Scythian period 232
seer(s), *ṛṣi* 27–28, 32, 34, 44, 77, 82, 85–86, 88n, 99–100, 103–04, 108, 110, 119n, 120n, 136–37, 139, 272
See also Brahman seer(s), *brahmarṣi*, Mādhyama seers, Naimiṣeya seers, *rājarṣi*, royal seer, *ṛṣi*, *vípra*
Semarang, Java xviii, 263
Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518), author of *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 150n
Sertkaya, Osman 163, 309n, 310n, 312n, 315n
seven-sistered, *saptásvasar*, Sarasvatī. *See under* Sarasvatī
Shah, Priyabala 118n, 132, 132n, 133
Shah, U. P. 2, 226n, 233, 234n, 241–43, 245, 245n, 246
shaker 173
See also vípra
shamanic-type figure 173
shanshi 善事, acting excellently 306n
shan yan 善言, good words 187
She Moteng 攝摩騰, Kāśyapa Mātaṅga? (first century) 150–51
See also Kāśyapa Mātaṅga
shen 身, body 168n

Shenajueduo 闍那崛多, Jñānagupta (523–600) 149
shense 身色, bodily aspect 304n
shenzhou 身呪, body spell 167, 169, 289, 292
See also body spell
sheponi 葉婆儞, *yavanī*, Ajowan caraway 314, 314n
shexiang 麝香, musk 310
shield, implement 200, 252, 252n, 258, 260–62
carried by
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252, 252n, 258, 260–62
Narasiṃha 200
Shijianzhu 世間主, Prajāpati 212
See also Prajāpati
shixionghuang 石雄黄, red arsenic sulfide 309n, 313
shizi 師子, lion 197n
See also cheng shizi 乘師子, *cheng shizi shang* 乘師子上
Shorea robusta resin 311
shouji 授記, *vyākaraṇa*, prophecy 298n
See also vyākaraṇa
shuizhou 水呪, water spell 290
See also water spell
Siddhas, semi-divine beings endowed with supernatural faculties 197n
Siddhi-kī-guphā, Deogarh 256, 256n
Sīha, father of smith Gova 231–32
Śilappadigāram by Ilango Adigal 262n
Śilendrabodhi, ninth-century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 149
sīmābandha, boundaries tying 166, 288–89, 289n
See also jiejie 結界
siṃhottama, best of lionesses 197, 197n, 198, 200–01, 304
Sinapis 314
Sinapis glauca 314
Sind, Pakistan 4
síndhu /Sindhu 18–21, 30, 49, 49n
Sindhu river 18
síndhumātar 18–21, 30n
Sinīvālī, goddess 46–47
śirīṣa, lebbek 309
Sishierzhang jing 四十二章經, *Sutra of the Forty-Two Articles* 150n
See also Sutra of the Forty-Two Articles
Sītā Sāvitrī 119n
Śiva 70, 104, 109n, 118n, 120n, 127, 131, 170, 186, 229, 247n, 254
abode on Mt. Kailāsa 131n, 186
Ardhanārīśvara Śiva 127
four-faced 120n
Śaṅkara 127
Śarva 70
Sthāṇu 104n, 120n
Śiva temple, Ghaṇṭaśāla, Andhra Pradesh xv, 229
Śivodbheda 98, 98n
six-armed
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252
Sarasvatī 248n, 248, 268
Vajrasarasvatī 268
Skanda, son of Śiva and Pārvatī 104, 104n, 133, 138, 141, 170, 254, 272
See also Kārttikeya, Kumāra
Skanda Purāṇa 117n, 186n, 200, 200n, 207, 212–14, 220, 247n, 251, 251n, 254n, 255–56, 256n, 258, 264–65
Skandagupta (r. ca. 455–67), king 236
Skjærvø, Prods Oktor 148, 150, 150n
Sky 62, 66, 68
See also Dyaus
Smith, Vincent 231n, 232n, 237n
smṛti, memory 305n
See also memory/remembering/remembrance
snāna, bath 162, 166, 178–80, 283, 290, 293
See also bathing ritual, *goemonburo* 五右衛門風呂, Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro, *mṛt-snāna*, *puṣya-snāna*
Soma 17, 21, 27n, 28, 32–33, 34n, 44–45, 45n, 47, 55, 61n, 65n, 66, 72–83, 101, 101n, 102, 102n, 106, 106n, 107, 115, 119n, 133–34, 138–39, 173, 178, 230, 272–73
See also Barter for Soma, *haṃsa*, Soma sacrifice, Soma Tīrtha
Soma sacrifice 101
Soma Tīrtha 82
songgaocao 嵩高草 310, 310n
songzhi 松脂, Chinese red pine resin 311

Sonkh, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh 253
sorcery 173
South India 230n, 245, 248
Southeast Asia 153, 201, 212, 251, 259, 263–64, 266, 269, 274
spear(s) 22, 23n, 166, 197, 253n, 258–59, 265, 289, 305
carried by
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 253n, 258–59, 265
Maruts 22, 23n
Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 305
speech 15, 17n, 26, 28, 30, 30n, 32–40, 42, 52–53, 53n, 57–62, 75, 83, 87, 89–90, 97, 112, 122–29, 138, 140–41, 158, 160, 187, 187n, 189, 191, 193, 201–02, 214, 216–19, 249, 268–69, 271–74, 278–79, 300, 300n, 303, 306, 307n
See also bhāratī, vác
Speech 36, 50, 58, 73–76, 78–80, 87, 90, 105, 133, 138, 141, 214, 219, 230, 272
See also Vāc, Vāṇī
spell(s) 74n, 75–76, 100, 159, 162–71, 179–80, 182–84, 188–91, 205–09, 217, 219–20, 277, 283–86, 289–91, 293, 295, 297–98, 301, 301n, 307, 307n
spell-arts-revenants, corresponding to Vetāḍas 284
spell-chewers, corresponding to Vetāḍas 284, 295
See also beseeching spell, body spell, body-protection spell, boundaries-tying spell, *bráhman*, charm(s), *dhāraṇī*, hot water spell, incantation(s), mantra(s), water spell, *zhou* 呪
spell master, *zhoushi* 呪師 168, 291
spike-nard 310, 314
spṛkkā, fenugreek 309
Sprockhoff, Joachim Friedrich 134n
śraddhacaro, companion 231–32
śramaṇa renunciants 174–76
Śrauta Sūtras 45, 72n, 85n
Śrī, Lakṣmī 115n, 123, 123n, 155–56, 156n, 236, 236n
See also Da Jixiang tiannü 大吉祥天女, Gongdetian 功徳天, Kichijōten 吉祥天, Lakṣmī
Śrīgṛha *sambhoga* 231–32
Śrīkuñja Tīrtha 101
śrīveṣṭaka, long-leaved Indian pine resin 311
Śrīvijaya, Sumatra 177n, 257, 257n
śrotriya, who knows the texts (Vedas) 113, 113n
Śrutadevatā/*śrutadevatā*, Jain Sarasvatī 234n, 248n
peacock mount 134n, 248n
See also Jain Sarasvatī, Śrutadevī
Śrutadevī, Śrutadevatā, Jain Sarasvatī 234n, 245
See also Jain Sarasvatī, Śrutadevatā
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich 252
staff, implement 209n
carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 259n
State Museum, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh xv–xvi, 231, 238, 240, 248–49
state protection. *See* kingdom/state protection
Sthāniya *kula* 231–32
Sthāṇu, Śiva 104n, 120n
Sthāṇu Tīrtha 99n, 102–09, 139
stick implement 199n, 267n
carried by
Sarasvatī 199n
Uga-Benzaiten 267n
stick-zither 227n, 238–39, 239n, 240–41
See also vīṇā, zither
von Stietencron, Heinrich 254
Storm Gods 11, 21, 21n, 22–23
See also Maruts
Strickmann, Michel 180
stupa 227, 229
Styrax benzoin 312
Styrax mukul benzoin 312
Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735), Shanwuwei 善無畏 157n
Subhrū 81
Sudās, Bhārata king 85
śūdra, aborigines class 10
Śukla Yajur Veda 10
See also White (*Śukla*) *Yajur Veda*
sūkṣmaśaila, cardamom 314, 314n
sūkta, hymn 9, 24, 86, 127
Sumatra, Indonesia 257n
Sumbha, demon 213

Sun 64n, 81, 122, 130, 168, 168n, 169, 180, 292
See also Āditya, Savitṛ, Sūrya
sun, carried by Mahiṣāsuramardinī 259
See also sūrya
Sunda, demon 120n
suoquzhe 索瞿者 315
Suprabhā river 102–03, 103n, 122
súrā, spirituous liquor 44–45, 45n
surâma, mix of *súrā* and Soma 44–45, 45n
Sureśvaraprabha, king, *Sutra of Golden Light* 175
surgery, major and minor 175n
Sūrya, Sun 41, 63–64, 64n, 113n
See also Sun
sūrya, sun 146
See also sun
Susambhava, king, *Sutra of Golden Light* 147
susattva, excellent being 202, 305
Suśruta Saṃhitā 176, 176n
susváyanta, who are fertile 30n
Sutlej river 88, 88n
sūtra, thread, string 132
Sutra of Golden Light 1–3, 3n, 5, 145–221, 225–26, 251, 256, 265–69, 271, 273–75, 277–315
Baogui edition 149, 149n, 154–58, 162, 175, 215n, 219, 257, 273, 278
See also Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese translation *here below*
Chinese translations. *See* Baogui, Dharmakṣema, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta, and Yijing *herein*
Dharmakṣema's Chinese translation 148, 148n, 149, 152–53, 153n, 154–56, 156n, 158–62, 175, 175n, 215n, 219, 273, 278–82
Khotanese translations 148, 150, 150n, 157n
Mongolian translations 148
Sanskrit 2–3, 5, 150n, 154–55, 155n, 156, 158, 158n, 159, 159n 161n, 162–72, 175, 177, 179n, 180n, 183–84, 184n, 186n, 187–207, 209–12, 212n, 215n, 217, 219–21, 256–58, 265–66, 269, 273–74, 277–315
Sogdian translation 148, 150
Tangut (Xi Xia) translation 148, 150
Tibetan translations 145n, 148–50, 157n, 163, 166, 166n, 183–84, 188, 207, 209n, 210, 210n, 220–21, 269, 274, 288n, 289n, 305n, 306n, 313n
Uighur, Old, translation 148, 150, 150n, 163, 188, 315n
Xi Xia translation. *See* Tangut *here above*
Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese translation 149, 149n, 154n, 162–72, 177n, 179n, 180n, 183–88, 190–99, 201n, 202–07, 217, 219–21, 257–58, 283–315
Yijing's Chinese translation 3, 145n, 149–50, 153–59, 162–72, 175, 175n, 177, 177n, 179n, 180, 180n, 183–96, 197n, 198–212, 215n, 216–21, 251, 256–59, 264–69, 273–75, 277–315
Sutra of the Forty-two Articles 150n, 151
See also Sishierzhang jing 四十二章經
Sutra of the Humane Kings 152n
sutrâman, whose protection is good 44
Śutudrī river 88
Suvarṇabhāsa Sūtra, *Sutra of Golden Light* 145
Suvarṇabhāsottama Sūtra, *Sutra of Golden Light* 145, 145n, 147, 279–81
Suveṇu river 102–03, 103n, 122
Svadhā, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
Svāhā, goddess, subdivided part of Ardhanārīśvara Śiva's female half 127
svāhā, invocation word 105, 126, 164, 166–67, 170, 170n, 189–90, 203, 305–06
Svarbhānu 63
Svarbhānu-Sūrya myth 63–64
Svayambhū 123n, 176
Brahmā 123n
Śvetaketu 106, 112n
Śvetāmbara Jains 231

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 135
swan, erroneous translation of *haṃsa* 134
Swāt, Pakistan 107, 230n, 263n
sweet flag 309
sword, implement 197, 200, 254, 258, 260–63, 265, 268, 305
  carried by
    Mahiṣāsuramardinī 254, 258, 260–63, 265
    Narasiṃha 200
    Vajrasarasvatī 268
    Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 305
swords 166, 289

Tabasheer 313
Tabernaemontana coronaria 312n
taboos 173
Taddei, Maurizio 228n, 263
tadyathā, in such a manner as follows 146, 164, 167n, 169, 188–89, 285, 290
  See also chezhita 哆姪吔, *dazhita* 怛姪他
tagara, pinwheel flower 312
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 10, 112, 119n
Taittirīya Śākhā 80
Taittirīya Saṃhitā 9, 57, 65, 72, 74n, 76–81, 84
Tamil Nadu xvii, 261
Tāmraliptī, eastern India 257n
Taṃsu, son of Sarasvatī and Matināra 116, 116n, 139
tanchang 壇場, altar place 165, 165n, 286n
  See also altar place
tangzhou 湯呪, hot water spell 167, 289–90
  See also hot water spell
tanjie 壇戒, ordination platform 286n
Tanwuchen 曇無讖, Dharmakṣema (385–433 or 436) 148
tanyatú, thunder 23, 27n, 49
Tapa Sardār, near Ghaznī, Afghanistan 263, 265n
tapas, ascetic practices, heat 56, 71, 99–100, 104, 104n, 106, 108, 109n, 120–21, 130n, 139, 185, 185n, 186, 186n, 187n, 211, 213–14, 220, 251, 256, 258, 265, 274
  See also ascetic practices, austerities, *mahātapas*
Taracavatī 188–89
Taracī, swift one 188–89
Tārkṣya, sage 106, 111–15
Tartakov, Gary Michael 260–61, 262n
tatpuruṣa compound 18n, 21n, 45n
ta xin 他心, [know] the minds of others 208, 208n
tejas, energy 104
Terminalia bellerica tree 132
terracotta plaques from Sonkh, Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh 253
Thieme, Paul 19–20, 34n, 74n, 78
Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha 208, 217
three Sarasvatī 40n, 43
  See also tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ
three-faced Vajrasarasvatī 268
three-headed female figure in the crown of Śiva Mahādeva, Elephanta, Maharashtra 247n
three-stanza praise of Kauṇḍinya 183–87, 205, 205n, 206, 209, 211, 214, 217, 219–20, 251, 277
tianyan 天眼, celestial eye 208
  See also celestial eye, *divyaṃ cakṣuḥ*
Tibet 134, 264
Tilottamā, Apsaras 120n
tīrtha, ford(s) 4, 82, 98, 98n, 100–04, 106, 108–09, 109n, 111, 123, 130n, 137, 139–40, 271
  Goddess's Ford 98
  Saptasārasvata Tīrtha 102–04, 111, 137
  Sārasvata Tīrtha 102, 104, 109–11
  Soma Tīrtha 82
  Śrīkuñja Tīrtha 101
  Sthāṇu Tīrtha 99n, 102–09, 139
  Udayāna Tīrtha 101
  Vasiṣṭhāpavāha Tīrtha 106, 106n, 109
  See also ford(s)
Tīrthaṅkaras 245
tīrthayātrā, pilgrimage 100
  See also pilgrimage
tiryagloka, middle realm, Jaina cosmology 245
tisráḥ sárasvatīḥ, the three Sarasvatī 43, 87
  See also three Sarasvatī

Tōdaiji 東大寺 monastery, Nara, Japan xviii, 1, 267, 275
Tōji 東寺 monastery, Kyoto, Japan 133n
Tokunaga Muneo 35n
tongue-pulling Vāgīśvarī 267, 267n, 268
tongue-quality of Buddhas 208, 217
tortoise mount of Yamunā 247
toxicology 175n
Trachyspermum copticum 314
transcription, phonetic 150n, 154, 156–57, 159, 164, 164n, 165, 167n, 169, 177, 188, 280n, 298n, 309–15
translation team(s) 149n, 164
trayī vidyā, the *Ṛg*, the *Sāma*, and the *Yajur Veda* 43, 43n
tree of paradise 114
tribes
  Barbaras 211
  Niṣādas 98–99, 136, 272
  Pulindas 211
  Śabaras 211
tribhaṅga, three bends, posture 237, 243–44
tribhuvaneśvarī, queen of the three worlds 192n
trident, implement 132, 211, 252–53, 253n, 254–56, 258–61, 263, 265
  carried by
    Caṇḍī 255
    Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252–53, 253n, 254–56, 258–61, 263, 265
    Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī as Biancaitian 211
    Sarasvatī 132
Trigonella corniculata 309
Trimūrti Maṇḍapa, Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu xvii, 262, 264
Trita, sage 101, 101n, 102n
Triveṇī, Prayāga, Uttar Pradesh 1
Tucci, Guiseppe 263n
tuoluoni 陀羅尼, *dhāraṇī* 159, 159n, 178, 190, 215n, 280n
  tuoluoni zongchi 陀羅尼總持, *dhāraṇī*-[i.e.,] complete hold 159, 159n, 178, 280n
Turki Śāhi period (ca. 660–890) 262
turmeric 313–14
Tuṣṭi, goddess, satisfaction 126
  form of Sarasvatī 126
tvac, Ceylon cinnamon 311
Tvaṣṭar, father of Saraṇyū 21n
tviṣi, energy 64, 64n
twice-born 10, 99, 102, 110, 122, 136–37, 211, 214, 272
  See also dvija

udakakoṭṭaka, water storeroom sudation 176
Udapāna 98
Udayagiri, Vidisha District, Madhya Pradesh xvii, 253, 253n, 254–55, 261
Udayāna Tīrtha 101
Uga-Benzaiten 宇賀辯才天 267n
  carrying
    key 267n
    stick 267n
    wish-fulfilling jewel 267n
Ugajin 宇賀神, Shinto deity 266n
Umā, spouse of Śiva 105, 126–27
umbrella(s) 165, 165n, 229, 288
University of Edinburgh 226n
University of Toronto xi, 2, 104n
Upadeśamālāvṛtti 246n
Upanayana, sacred thread ceremony 122
upāṅga, supplement 176
Upaniṣads 10, 36, 60, 134
upāsaka, lay follower (m.) 294–95
upāsikā, lay follower (f.) 294–95
Upasunda, demon 120n
upaveda, sub-Veda 176, 176n
uposatha (Pali), *poṣadha* 146
ūrdhvaloka, upper realm, Jaina cosmology 245
urv àntárikṣam, vast middle space 13n
Uṣas, Dawn 12n, 28, 64n, 66–72
  daughter/consort of Prajāpati 66–67, 67n, 68, 70–71
  See also Dawn
uśīra, vetiver grass 314
utpala, blue lotus or water lily 193, 302
Uttar Pradesh xv–xvii, 9, 238–40, 248–49

vā́c, speech 26, 30, 33–37, 42, 46, 46n, 52–53, 53n, 57–62, 87, 89, 271
  See also speech, voice
Vāc, Speech 26, 33n, 35–39, 44, 52–

53, 59–63, 66, 72–84, 87, 91, 106–07, 110–12, 115–16, 118, 123, 125, 133, 138–39, 213n, 214, 230, 249, 268, 272–73
daughter/consort of Prajāpati 61–62, 66, 87, 90–91, 116, 139, 141, 272
goddess of knowledge 74, 77, 79–80
as knowledge 26, 59–60, 74, 87, 90, 123, 219, 271
and music 72, 74–75, 79–80, 83–84, 87, 138, 249, 272
See also Speech
vacanaṃ śubham, fine speech 187, 300
Vācaspati, Lord of Speech 61, 61n
See also Brahmaṇaspati, Bṛhaspati, Lord of Speech
vacovíd, finder of words 30, 34
Vadhryaśva, father of Divodāsa 14n
Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa 10, 72, 72n, 80–81, 106
Vādhūla school 72n
Vadodara, Gujarat xvi–xvii, 241–42, 246, 248
Vāgīśa, Lord of Speech 268
Vāgīśvarī, Lady of Speech 267–68
carrying pincers 267
eight-armed 267
lion mount 267
tongue-pulling 267–68
wielding weapons 267
vaiṇavī, wooden staff of *vīṇā* 132–33
Vairā *śākhā* 231–32
Vaiśampāyana, pupil of sage Vyāsa 101–02, 109
Vaiśya, class 95
Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā 9, 26, 31, 37, 45, 52, 58, 61, 65, 90, 134n
vajra 49, 49n, 197, 252n, 255, 258–59, 259n, 260, 263, 265, 265n, 267n, 305, 305n
carried by
Mahiṣāsuramardinī 252n, 259n, 260, 263, 265, 265n
Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258–59, 267n, 305
Indra's vajra 255
Vajrasarasvatī 268
carrying
chopper 268
cranium 268
jewel 268
lotus 268
sword 268
wheel 268
six-armed 268
three-faced 268
Vālmīki, sage, traditionally accepted author of the *Rāmāyaṇa* 55, 134n, 212, 214
See also Gaofeng 高峰
Vana Parvan, *Mahābhārata* 101
Vaṅga kingdom, Bengal 237
Vāṇī, Speech 105, 112, 112n, 126, 131n
See also Speech
Vantaparagadh, Rajasthan 244
varada mudrā, boon-giving hand gesture 233n, 234, 248
Varāhamihira, author of *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* 179n
Varendraketu, king, *Sutra of Golden Light* 153
varṇa, classes 10, 89, 95
varṣa, rain, rainy season 23, 147
Varuṇa, head of the Ādityas 12n, 28–29, 41, 41n, 189, 244
Varuṇapraghāsa ritual 55
Varūtrī, one of the wives of the gods 25n
várūtrīḥ, female guardian spirits 24
Vasantgarh, Rajasthan 241–45, 249
Vasiṣṭha, seer 88n, 99, 99n, 103–06, 108, 119n, 137, 139
Vasiṣṭhāpavāha Tīrtha 106, 106n, 109
vāstoṣ páti, Lord of the Sacrificial Ground 65, 65n, 66–67
Vāsudeva I, later-Kuṣāṇa-period ruler 253
Vasus, group of deities 26, 130
vāvaśānā́ḥ, longing, bellowing 30–31
Vāyu, Wind 41, 71
Vāyu Purāṇa 118, 127, 133, 138, 140, 272
Vedas 4, 43, 60, 74, 79–80, 87n, 95, 98–99, 102, 107, 109–13, 116n, 119n, 122–23, 128, 132, 136n, 137, 140–41, 212, 219, 230, 249, 271, 273
Vedic magico-religious healing 172–75, 180–81, 219, 273

Vetāḍas, Vetālas, spirits occupying corpses and uttering curses 283–84, 284n, 294–95, 295n
Vetālas. *See* Vetāḍas
vetiver grass 314
Vibhvan, one of the Ṛbhus 50, 50n
Videha 10
vidyā́, sciences, knowledge 60, 128n, 299n
Vidyādevīs, group of sixteen Jain goddesses 245, 245n, 246
See also Cakreśvarī, Mahāmānasī
Vidyādharas, knowledge/spell holders 100, 129n
Viennot, Odette 244n, 252, 252n, 253n
vihavá, competitive invocation 73n
Vijayāditya (696–733/4), king 260
Vimalodā or Vimalodakā river 102–03, 103n, 122
vīṇā, harp, lute, zither xv, 1, 1n, 5, 73, 79–80, 83–84, 87, 128–29, 131, 131n, 132–33, 138–39, 141, 199n, 216, 227–28, 228n, 230, 230n, 235, 236n, 238–41, 245, 247–50, 269, 271–73, 275
played by
female figure on Bhārhut stupa-pillar xv, 227
female figure on lion, Gandhāra 230
Gandharva Pañcaśikha 228
Samudragupta on coin xv, 235
Sarasvatī 1, 73, 79, 84, 128–29, 131–33, 139, 141, 216, 228, 238–41, 247–50, 269, 271–73, 275
South Indian goddess on *makara* 245
See also bow-shaped harp, harp, *kacchapī vīṇā*, long-necked plucked lute, lute, pear-shaped lute, *Sarasvatī vīṇā*, stick-zither, zither
Vinaśana, place where the Sarasvatī river disappears 84, 88–89, 98, 98n, 136–37, 271–72
Vinaya rules of conduct 146, 174
See also prātimokṣa
Vināyaka, obstacle-creating god, Buddhism 283–84, 294–95
Vindhya mountains 200, 210, 212, 215, 220, 255
Vindhyavāsinī, Vindhya-dwelling goddess 170, 170n, 186n, 200, 200n, 201, 203, 207, 210–16, 220–21, 251, 255–56, 258, 264–65, 274
armed females spring from her limbs 213
delights in flesh and liquor 210
her knowledge 212, 214
surrounded by wild animals 211
worshipped by tribesmen and thieves 210
See also Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī, Nidrā-Vindhyavāsinī
Vipāś river 88
vípra, ecstatic seer, shaker, sage 34, 34n, 35n, 105n, 114–15, 123n, 127n, 128n, 129n, 173
vīra, brave, hero 51, 98, 185
Vira, Raghu 75
Vīrápatnī, whose husband is a hero, Sarasvatī 15n, 26–27, 50–52
Vīrapatnī river 50, 50n
vīryà, manly energy, semen, vigour, valour 46, 46n, 55, 104, 170
viś, common folk 10
Viśālā river 102–03, 103n, 122
Visamatī 188–89
Viṣṇu 41n, 99, 106, 112, 198, 200, 210–11
Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa 118, 118n, 131–33, 139–40, 178, 239, 247, 250, 273
Viśvakarman, architect of the gods 120n
Viśvāmitra, seer 99, 99n, 104, 104n, 105, 105n, 108, 137
viśvarūpā, epithet of Sarasvatī 122n
Viśvāvasu, Gandharva 72–73
viśve devā́ḥ, All Gods 28, 49
See also All Gods
Vivasvant, father of the Aśvins 21n
Vogel, Jean Philippe 134
voice 35, 35n, 129–30, 202, 208, 306
of the Buddha 208
of Sarasvatī 202, 306
Sarasvatī *vrata* gives sweet, melodious voice 129–30
vā́c as 35, 35n
vrata, observances, vows 55, 67, 114n, 128–31, 138
against *vrata*, *ápavrata* 67, 119n

vratapā́, one who protects the observances 65–67
Vṛtra, dragon, obstructor of Waters, slain by Indra 30, 47, 47n, 48–49, 49n, 51
vṛtraghnī́, Vṛtra-slayer (f.), Sarasvatī 15n, 47–48, 50
vṛtrahán, Vṛtra-slayer (m.) 47, 47n, 48, 50
vyākaraṇa, expounder, prophecy 190, 298, 298n, 301
  See also shouji 授記
vyākhyāna mudrā, teaching hand gesture 233n, 234
vyāná, breath 40n, 46, 46n
Vyāsa, Dvaipāyana, sage, traditionally accepted author of the *Mahābhārata* 96
  See also Dvaipāyana

Wackernagel, Jakob 12n
war(s) 150–51, 162, 237, 284
Warrior Goddess, Devī, popularly called Durgā 198, 213–16, 220, 255, 264, 266, 268–69, 274–75
  wielding weapons 216
water 1, 12, 12n, 14–16, 20, 23, 23n, 32, 35, 37–38, 44, 47, 56–57, 62, 62n, 84, 86, 88, 88n, 89, 97, 99, 105, 109, 133, 136, 172, 182, 219, 230, 272–73
water pot 128–29, 131, 131n, 132–33, 139, 141, 234, 239, 246–47, 250, 273
  carried by
    Brahmāṇī 131, 246
    Sarasvatī 128–29, 131, 131n, 132–33, 139, 239, 246–47, 250, 273
  See also kamaṇḍalu
water spell 167–69, 290
  See also shuizhou 水呪
water storeroom sudation, *udakakoṭṭaka* 176
Waters 11, 16–18, 18n, 19, 23, 23n, 36, 38–39, 47, 47n, 48, 52, 86, 105, 110, 172–73
  See also Āpas
weapon(s) 5, 49, 105, 196, 199, 199n, 200, 200n, 207, 212, 216, 220, 225–26, 251, 253–59, 264–69, 271, 274–75, 287
  wielded by
    Biancaitian/Benzaiten 266, 269
    Four Great Kings 216, 266
    Kauśikī-Vindhyavāsinī 200, 200n, 212, 220, 251, 258, 264
    Mahiṣāsuramardinī 200, 225, 251, 253–55, 258–59, 266, 269, 274
    Narasiṃha 200
    Sarasvatī, *Sutra of Golden Light* 5, 196, 199–200, 207, 216, 220, 226, 251, 256–59, 264–69, 271, 274–75, 287
    South-Indian Sarasvatī 199n
    Vāgīśvarī 267
    Warrior Goddess 216
weaving 33, 46
wei shen 威神, powerful deities 292n
weili 威力, power 298n
weixiang 葦香 314
wenzi juyi 文字句義, words and meanings of phrases 279n
wheel, weapon, implement 197, 258, 260–63, 265, 265n, 268, 305
  carried by
    Mahiṣāsuramardinī 258, 260–63, 265
    Vajrasarasvatī 268
    Yijing's Biancaitian 197, 258, 305
White (*Śukla*) *Yajur Veda* 10, 44
Whitney, William Dwight 12n, 41n
Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 231n
Witzel, Michael 9, 9n, 13, 72n, 85, 88, 88n, 89
wrinkled giant hyssop 312n
Wu Zhao (d. 705), empress 153
Wudi (561–78), emperor 149n
Wuranzhuo tuoluoni *pin* 無染著陀羅尼品, Chapter of the Non-clinging *Dhāraṇī*, in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 215n, 216n
Wuwei 武威, Gansu 148n

xi 希, rare 304n
Xian yang sheng jiao lun 顯揚聖教論, Xuanzang's 玄奘 (d. 664) Chinese translation of the *Āryaśāsanaprakaraṇa*(?) 156n
xiang 相, marks 194, 194n, 195n, 303n, 304n

  See also lakṣaṇa, marks
xiangfuzi 香附子, nut grass 313
xiangmo 香末, fragrant powder 166, 289n
xiangtang 香湯, herbs and hot water, fragrant hot water 166, 166n, 167, 289n
xidoukou 細豆蔻, Chinese cardamom 314
xingzhe 行者, practitioner 168
xionghuang 雄黃, red arsenic sulfide 309n, 313
Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. 664) 156n

Yādavas 101n
Yājñavalkya, sage 60, 112
Yajur Veda 4, 9, 9n, 10, 26, 40n, 43–56, 60, 72, 87–89, 110, 140, 172
Yakṣa(s) 82, 82n, 100, 192, 203, 212, 215n, 217, 227, 302, 306
Yakṣīs 227, 245
yákṣma, consumption, tuberculosis 173
Yama 41, 124–25
Yamunā
  goddess 244, 247, 247n, 250
    tortoise mount 247
  river 1, 10, 16n, 88n, 97
Yasodadevi, V. 227n, 229n
Yaśogupta (d.u.), Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多 149, 149n
  Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. *See under Sutra of Golden Light*, Yaśogupta/Jñānagupta's Chinese translation
yātsattra, mobile sacrificial sessions 85, 101n, 137, 271
yavanī, Ajowan caraway 314, 314n
Ye shes sde, ninth-century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light* into Tibetan 149
yellow sarson 314
yellow sweet clover 312
Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多, Yaśogupta (d.u.) 149
Yijing 義浄 (635–713) 149
  Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*. *See under Sutra of Golden Light*, Yijing's Chinese translation
  German translation of Yijing's Chinese version of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 149
Yinzhu tuoluoni *pin* 銀主陀羅尼品, Chapter of the Silver Lord *Dhāraṇī*, in Baogui's edition of the *Sutra of Golden Light* 215n
Yixing 一行 (673–727) 156n, 157n
Yogacārabhūmi Śāstra 156n
Yokochi Yuko 117, 210, 212–13, 255, 255n, 256, 260, 261n
yonggui 用鬼, Puṣya 285
  See also Puṣya constellation
yongjin 勇進, brave energy 185, 206, 211, 299n
yongmeng 勇猛, brave 185
yongmeng jingjin 勇猛精進 185, 211, 299n
yuanzhou 願呪, beseeching spell 169, 292–93
  See also beseeching spell
Yudhiṣṭhira, eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers 99n, 101
Yujia shi di lun 瑜伽師地論, Xuanzang's 玄奘 (d. 664) translation of the *Yogacārabhūmi Śāstra* 156n
yujin 欝金, turmeric 313, 314n
yujingen 欝金根, turmeric 314
yujinxiang 欝金香, turmeric 313
Yusufzai 230n

zhantan 栴檀, sandalwood 313, 313n
zhantannuo 栴檀娜, *candana*, sandalwood 313n
zhantanxiang 栴檀香, sandalwood 313
zhou 肘, elbow, measurement 165, 165n, 286n
zhou 呪, spell 162–63, 166n, 167–69, 190, 204, 206, 217, 283–84, 284n, 285, 288–94, 296, 298, 301, 301n, 307, 307n
  hushenzhou 護身呪, body-protection spell 169, 292–93
  jiejiezhou 結界呪, boundaries-tying spell 166, 166n, 289
  shenzhou 身呪, body spell 167–69, 289–90, 292–93
  shuizhou 水呪, water spell 167–69, 290
  tangzhou 湯呪, hot water spell 167–69, 289–90
  yuanzhou 願呪, beseeching spell

169, 292–93
See also *dhāraṇī*, incantation(s), mantra(s), spells
zhoushi 呪師, spell master 168, 291
zhoushui 呪水, spell the water 167
Zhouzhu 洲渚, Dvaipāyana 212
See also Dvaipāyana, Vyāsa
zhuhuang 竹黄, *Concretio Silicea Bambusae*, Tabasheer 313
Zhunti 准胝, Cuṇḍī, Caṇḍī 264
See also Caṇḍī, Cuṇḍī
zither 1n, 227, 227n, 228, 228n, 238–41
See also stick-zither, *vīṇā*
zong 聰, intelligence 299n
zongchi 總持, complete hold, *dhāraṇī* 280n, 305n
zongming 聰明, wise, intelligent, knowledgeable 299n
zuisheng 最勝, most victorious 149, 196, 199
zunzhe 尊者, venerable one 211
Zysk, Kenneth 173, 173n, 174–75

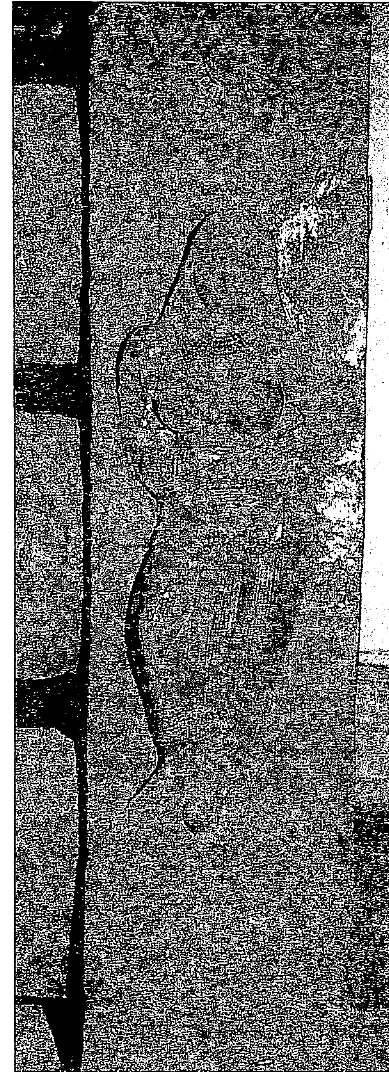


Fig.1 *Vīṇā*-player on a stupa pillar from Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh. Second century B.C.E. Red sandstone. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

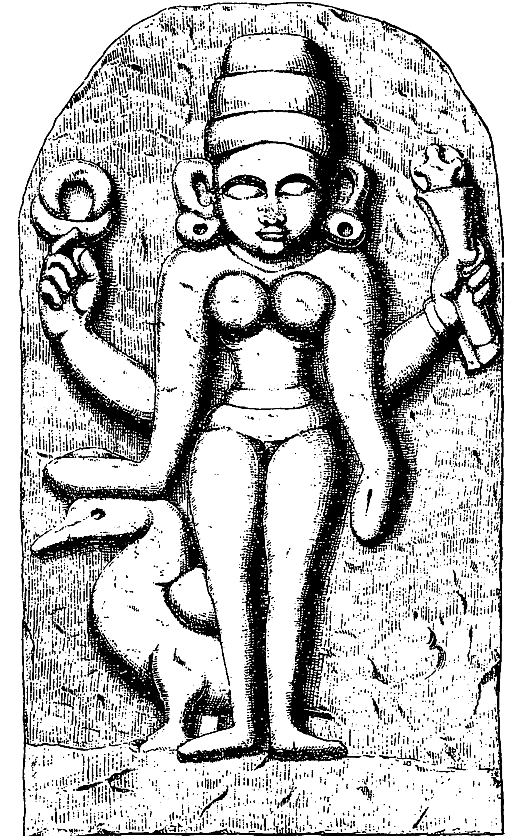


Fig.2 Modern Sarasvatī carved on a defaced second- or third-century C.E. Buddhist image from Ghaṇṭaśāla, Andhra Pradesh. Marble. Śiva temple, Ghaṇṭaśāla. From Rea 1894, pl.XXXI.



Fig.3 Sarasvatī sculpture from Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā, Uttar Pradesh. Ca. third century C.E. Red sandstone. Ht. 57 cm. State Museum, Lucknow. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.



Fig.4 Obverse of Samudragupta lyrist type coin. R. ca. 350–75. Gold. Diameter 2.20 cm. Thickness 1 mm. Lingen Collection, The Netherlands. Photograph courtesy of Jan Lingen.

Fig.5 Reverse of Samudragupta lyrist type coin. R. ca. 350–75. Gold. Diameter 2.20 cm. Thickness 1 mm. Lingen Collection, The Netherlands. Photograph courtesy of Jan Lingen.



Fig.6 Obverse of Samācāradeva *rājalīlā* type coin. R. ca. 550–75. Gold. Diameter 2.03 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.

Fig.7 Reverse of Samācāradeva *rājalīlā* type coin. R. ca. 550–75. Gold. Diameter 2.03 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.

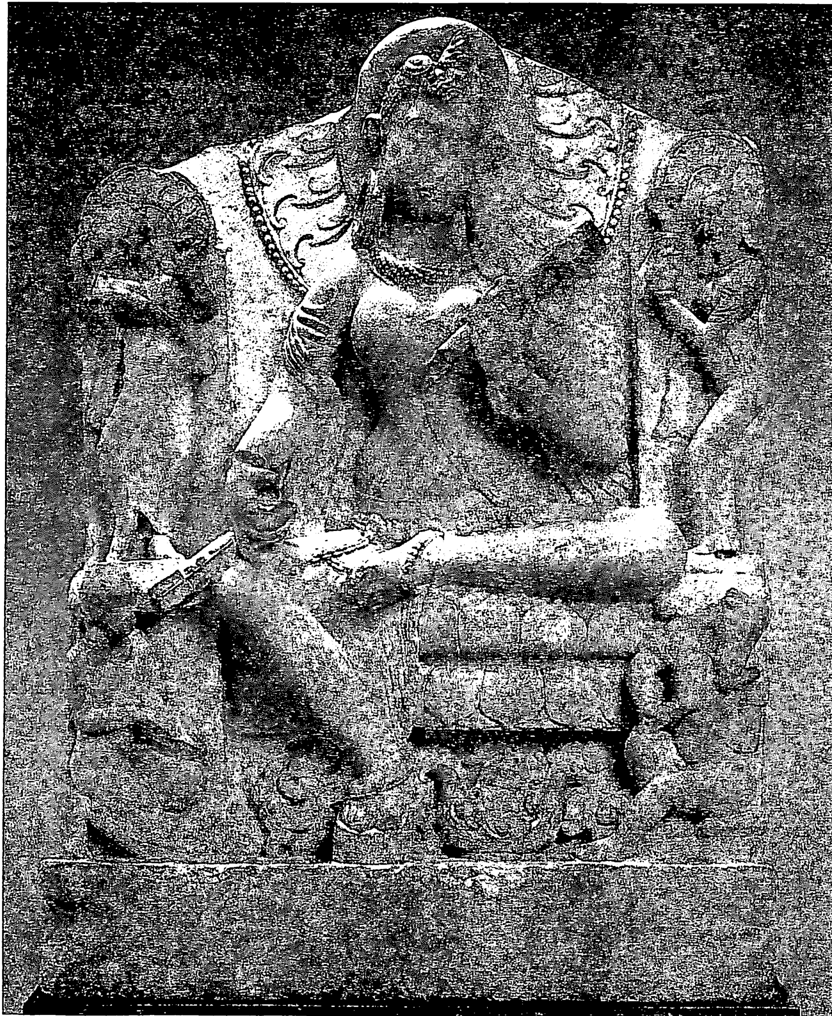


Fig.8 Sarasvatī sculpture from Uttar Pradesh. Sixth century. Sandstone. Ht. 84.2 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Photograph from The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



Fig.9 Sarasvatī sculpture from Sārnāth, Uttar Pradesh. Sixth century. Reddish Chunar sandstone. Ht. 35.5 cm. Sārnāth Museum of Archaeology. Courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.



Fig.10 Sarasvatī and two attendants in medallion from Uttar Pradesh. Ca. 600–99. Buff sandstone. 64 x 68 cm. State Museum, Lucknow. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.



Fig.11 Sarasvatī sculpture from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Ca. seventh century. Beige sandstone. Ht. ca. 12.70 cm. Courtesy of the Indian Museum, Kolkata. Photograph courtesy of The John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art.

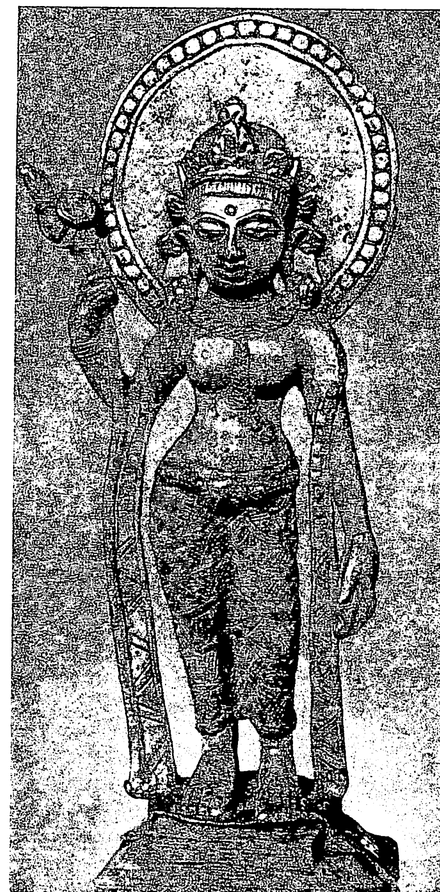


Fig.12 Sarasvatī from Ākoṭā, Gujarat. Ca. 600–20. Bronze. Ht. 26.67 cm. Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Courtesy of the Department of Museums, Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from Shah 1959, pl.18.



Fig.13 Sarasvatī from Ākoṭā, Gujarat. Late sev enth century. Bronze. Ht. 31.24 cm. Museun and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Courtesy of th Department of Museums, Museum and Pictur Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from Shah 1959 pl.33.

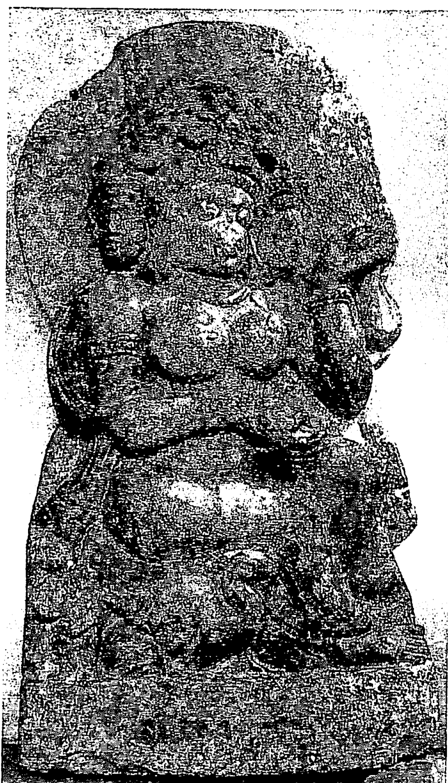


Fig.14 Brahmāṇī from Koteswar, Banaskantha District, Gujarat. Sixth century. Stone. Ht. 60.96 cm. Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Courtesy of the Department of Museums, Museum and Picture Gallery, Vadodara. Photograph from the American Institute of Indian Studies.



Fig.15 Sarasvatī in the shrine of the river goddesses in the left courtyard of Cave 16 (Kailāsanātha) at Ellorā, Maharashtra. Eighth to ninth century. Stone. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

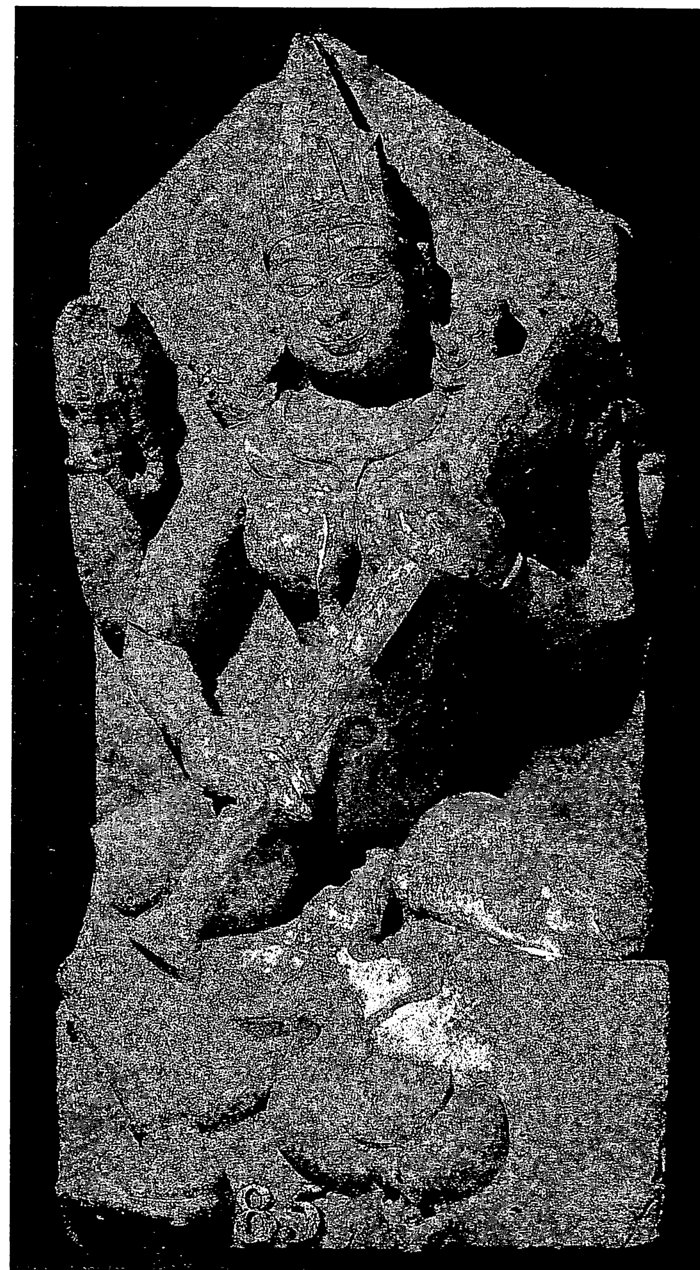


Fig.16 Sarasvatī sculpture from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Tenth century. Stone. Ht. 68.6 cm. © Copyright the Trustees of The British Museum. Photograph from The British Museum.



Fig.17 Relief of Mahiṣāsuramardinī at Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh, to the proper left of the entrance to Cave 6. Dated 401–02. Stone. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.



Fig.18 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh. Late third century. Stone. 46.2 x 24.5 cm. bpk / Museum für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Iris Papadopoulos.



Fig.19 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Durgā Temple in Aihole, Karnataka. Sixth century. Stone. Ht. 125 cm. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

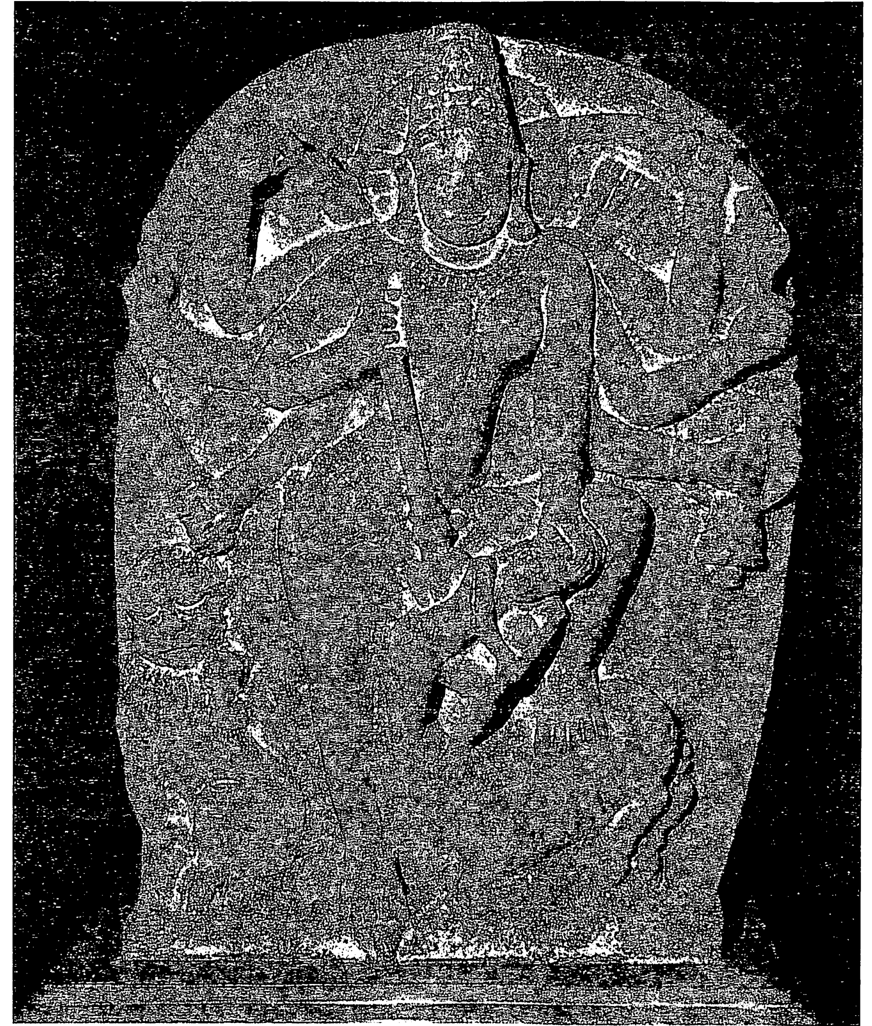


Fig.20 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Ālampūr, Andhra Pradesh. Eighth century. Stone. 81 x 65 cm. Ālampūr Museum. Courtesy of the Archaeology and Museums Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

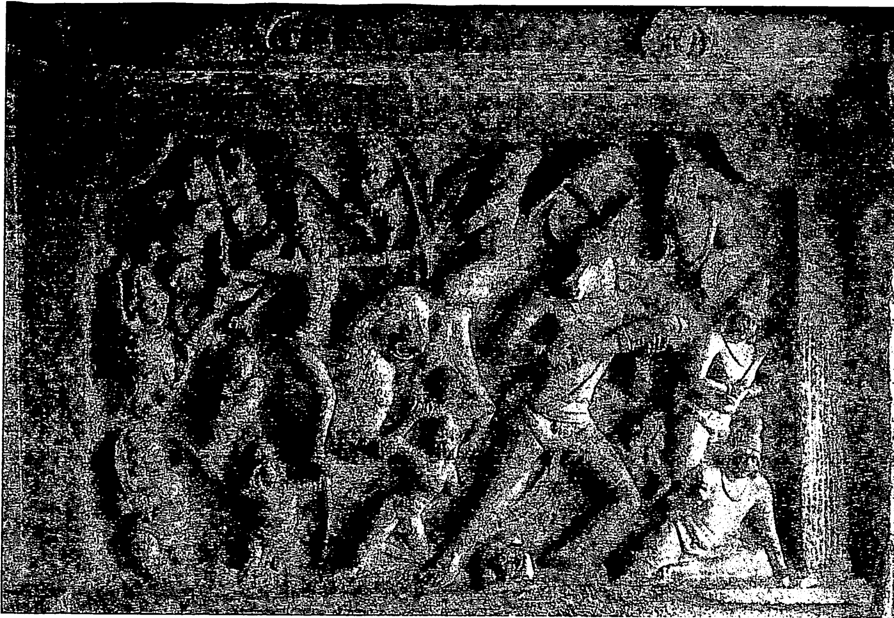


Fig. 21 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from the Mahiṣāsuramardinī Maṇḍapa of Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Seventh century. Granite. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.

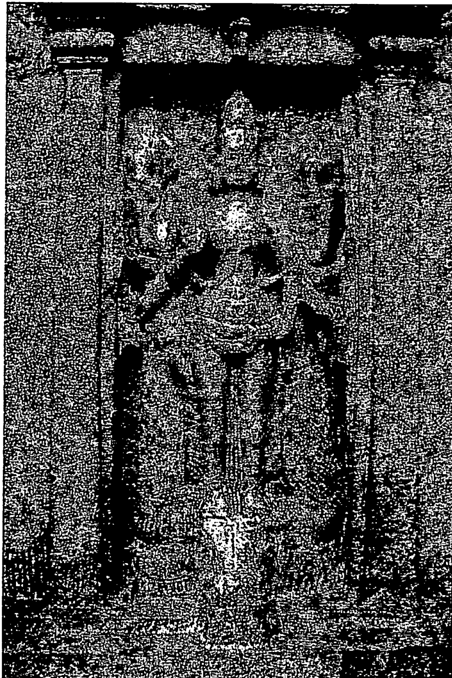


Fig.22 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from the Trimūrti Maṇḍapa of Mahābalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Late seventh century. Granite. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.



Fig.23 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Gardez, Afghanistan. Seventh or eighth century. Marble. Ht. ca. 60 cm. Used to be in the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.



Fig.24 Eight-armed Mahiṣāsuramardinī from Semarang, central Java, Indonesia. Eighth century. Stone. Ht. 77 cm. Museum Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta, no.129. Photograph courtesy of Koezuka Takashi.



Fig.25 Eight-armed Benzaiten from the Hokkedō of Tōdaiji in Nara, Japan. Eighth century. Clay. Ht. 219 cm. Photograph from Asukaen.